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Agenda item 107
Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Security Council
Seventieth year

Identical letters dated 9 March 2015 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, and further to our identical letters of 26 February 2015 addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council (A/69/804-S/2015/152), I wish to draw your attention to the two annexed tables (see annex). The first contains a list of Syrian civilian victims of attacks by armed terrorist gangs belonging to the organization Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) against several Assyrian villages in the countryside of Hasakah governorate. The second contains the names of 23 civilians abducted and subsequently freed by ISIL.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic again calls on the Security Council to assume its responsibilities by ensuring full implementation of its counter-terrorism resolutions, particularly resolutions 2170 (2014), 2178 (2014) and 2199 (2015). The Security Council must condemn and hold accountable those regimes that sponsor terrorism, foremost among which are Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar, and prevail upon them to bring an end to their destructive practices, which endanger international peace and security.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter issued as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 107, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the identical letters dated 9 March 2015 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

List of households and violations committed against Assyrian villages in Hasakah governorate

No.	*Full name*	*Village*	*Number of people in household*	*Number of women in household*	*Number and sex of children*	*Date of departure*	*Reason for departure*	*Type of violation experienced*	*Number of family lost*	*Entity contacted for services*
1	Kabi Malak Isma'il	Tall al-Jazirah	4	2	1 male, 1 female	23/02/2015	Attack by armed terrorist organization against village	Abduction	4	Greek Orthodox Charitable Association — Mawaddah Association (MA) — Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) — other civil society organizations
2	Sahih Binyamin Shimon	Tall al-Jazirah	3	1	1 male	–	–	Abduction	3	–
3	Biruniyah Yukhanna Samo	Tall al-Jazirah	4	3	–	23/02/2015	Attack by armed terrorist organization against village	Abduction	3	Greek Patriarchate Charitable Association (GPCA) — MA — SARC — Kurdish Red Crescent (KRC) — Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
4	Wanis Malak Isma'il	Tall al-Jazirah	3	1	1 female	23/02/2015	Attack by armed terrorist organization against village	Abduction	3	–
5	Tamatiyus Wanis Isma'il	Tall al-Jazirah	4	3	2 females	23/02/2015	Attack by armed terrorist organization against village	Abduction	4	–
6	Rajinah Hammo	Tall al-Jazirah	2	2	–	23/02/2015	Attack by armed terrorist organization against village	Abduction	2	–
7	Edward Kako Kako	Tall al-Jazirah	1	–	–	23/02/2015	Attack by armed terrorist organization against village	Abduction	1	–

No.	Full name	Village	Number of people in household	Number of women in household	Number and sex of children	Date of departure	Reason for departure	Type of violation experienced	Number of family lost	Entity contacted for services
8	Ramin Amir Ru'il	Tall al-Jazirah	3	1	1 female	23/02/2015	Attack by armed terrorist organization against village	Abduction	3	–
9	Nimris Martin Nimris	Tall al-Jazirah	1	–	–	23/02/2015	Attack by armed terrorist organization against village	Abduction	1	–
10	Amir Wablus Ru'il	Tall al-Jazirah	2	1	–	23/02/2015	Attack by armed terrorist organization against village	Abduction	2	–
11	Sadiq Malak Isma'il	Tall al-Jazirah	4	1	1 male	23/02/2015	Attack by armed terrorist organization against village	Abduction	4	–
12	Ashur Fidro Rustum	Tall al-Jazirah	1	1	–	23/02/2015	Attack by armed terrorist organization against village	Abduction	1	–
13	Orishalam Wafkha	Tall al-Jazirah	2	–	1 male	23/02/2015	Attack by armed terrorist organization against village	Abduction	2	–
14	Najibah Yukhanna Khanayi'us	Tall al-Jazirah	1	1	–	23/02/2015	Attack by armed terrorist organization against village	Abduction	1	–
15	Hamsun Emmanuel Yukhanna	Tall al-Jazirah	2	1	–	23/02/2015	Attack by armed terrorist organization against village	Abduction	2	–
16	Adnuba Yukhanna Emmanuel	Tall al-Jazirah	2	1	–	23/02/2015	Attack by armed terrorist organization against village	Abduction	2	–
17	Charles Elisha Darumo	Tall al-Jazirah	6	5	4 females	23/02/2015	Attack by armed terrorist organization against village	Abduction	5	GPCA — MA — SARC — KRC — UNHCR
18	Joseph Yukhanna Khnanisho	Tall al-Jazirah	5	3	1 male, 2 females	23/02/2015	Attack by armed terrorist organization against village	Abduction	5	–
19	Malak Siddiq Isma'il	Tall al-Jazirah	2	1	–	23/02/2015	Attack by armed terrorist organization against village	Abduction	2	–

No.	Full name	Village	Number of people in household	Number of women in household	Number and sex of children	Date of departure	Reason for departure	Type of violation experienced	Number of family lost	Entity contacted for services
20	Sa'id Emmanuel Yukhanna	Tall al-Jazirah	6	2	2 males, 1 female	23/02/2015	Attack by armed terrorist organization against village	Abduction	6	–
21	Khalil Binyamin Shimon	Tall al-Jazirah	8	5	1 male, 4 females	23/02/2015	Attack by armed terrorist organization against village	Abduction	8	–
22	Adam David Kako	Tall al-Jazirah	4	3	4 brothers	23/02/2015	Attack by armed terrorist organization against village	Abduction	4	–
23	Abras Darmo Mansur	Tall al-Jazirah	4	2	1 male	23/02/2015	Attack by armed terrorist organization against village	Abduction	3	GPCA — MA — SARC — KRC — UNHCR
24	Martin Nimris	Tall al-Jazirah	4	2	1 female	23/02/2015	Attack by armed terrorist organization against village	Abduction	2	GPCA — MA — SARC — KRC — UNHCR
25	Shadrakh David Khushaba	Tall al-Jazirah	2	1	–	23/02/2015	Attack by armed terrorist organization against village	Abduction	2	–
26	Georges Bulus Isho	Tall Hurmuz	5	2	2 males, 1 female	23/02/2015	Attack by armed terrorist organization against village	Abduction	1	GPCA — MA — SARC — KRC — UNHCR
27	Abraham Bulbul Qatinah	Tall Hurmuz	5	2	–	23/02/2015	Attack by armed terrorist organization against village	Killing	–	GPCA — MA — SARC — KRC — UNHCR
28	Hurmuz Kifarkis Khano	Tall Hurmuz	4	1	1 male	23/02/2015	Attack by armed terrorist organization against village	Injury	–	GPCA — MA — SARC — KRC — UNHCR
29	Yakhanis Adam Adam	Tall Kawran	2	1	–	23/02/2015	Attack by armed terrorist organization against village	Abduction	1	GPCA — MA — SARC — KRC — UNHCR
30	Salim Andrawus Dashnu	Tall Kawran	2	1	–	23/02/2015	Attack by armed terrorist organization against village	Abduction	2	GPCA — MA — SARC — KRC — UNHCR
31	Oya Sahsun Zaba	Tall Kawran	3	2	1 female	23/02/2015	Attack by armed terrorist organization against village	Abduction	1	GPCA — MA — SARC — KRC — UNHCR

No.	Full name	Village	Number of people in household	Number of women in household	Number and sex of children	Date of departure	Reason for departure	Type of violation experienced	Number of family lost	Entity contacted for services
32	Yusuf Oya Zaba	Tall Kawran	4	3	1 male	23/02/2015	Attack by armed terrorist organization against village	Abduction	1	GPCA — MA — SARC — KRC — UNHCR
33	Yu'il Sahsun Zaba	Tall Kawran	4	3	2 females	23/02/2015	Attack by armed terrorist organization against village	Abduction	2	GPCA — MA — SARC — KRC — UNHCR
34	Isma'il Isho Isma'il	Tall Kawran	3	1	–	23/02/2015	Attack by armed terrorist organization against village	Abduction	1	GPCA — MA — SARC — KRC — UNHCR
35	Georges Isho Isma'il	Tall Kawran	2	1	–	23/02/2015	Attack by armed terrorist organization against village	Abduction	1	GPCA — MA — SARC — KRC — UNHCR
36	Oya Wikram Mirza	Tall Kawran	3	1	1 male	23/02/2015	Attack by armed terrorist organization against village	Abduction	1	GPCA — MA — SARC — KRC — UNHCR
37	Jahil Georges Kulyat	Tall Kawran	5	4	–	23/02/2015	Attack by armed terrorist organization against village	Abduction	1	GPCA — MA — SARC — KRC — UNHCR
38	Jamil Yalda Odisho	Tall Kawran	1	–	–	23/02/2015	Attack by armed terrorist organization against village	Abduction	1	–
39	Tato Odisho Tato	Tall Kawran	4	2	–	23/02/2015	Attack by armed terrorist organization against village	Abduction	1	GPCA — MA — SARC — KRC — UNHCR
40	Abdu Mirza Mirza	Tall Kawran	6	4	1 male, 3 females	23/02/2015	Attack by armed terrorist organization against village	Abduction	2	GPCA — MA — SARC — KRC — UNHCR
41	Mirza Khaya Mirza	Tall Kawran	3	2	–	23/02/2015	Attack by armed terrorist organization against village	Abduction	3	–
42	Ilyas Mikha'il Mirza	Tall Kawran	3	1	1 female	23/02/2015	Attack by armed terrorist organization against village	Abduction	1	GPCA — MA — SARC — KRC — UNHCR
43	Mikha'il Khaya Mirza	Tall Kawran	6	3	–	23/02/2015	Attack by armed terrorist organization against village	Abduction	1	GPCA — MA — SARC — KRC — UNHCR

No.	Full name	Village	Number of people in household	Number of women in household	Number and sex of children	Date of departure	Reason for departure	Type of violation experienced	Number of family lost	Entity contacted for services
44	Shalmon Kuliyana Safar	Tall Hurmuz	2	1	–	23/02/2015	Attack by armed terrorist organization against village	Abduction	1	GPCA — MA — SARC — KRC — UNHCR
45	Yukhanna Bulbul Qatinah	Tall Hurmuz	1	–	–	23/02/2015	Attack by armed terrorist organization against village	Abduction	1	–
46	Shamiran Isho Shiba	Tall Hurmuz	2	2	–	23/02/2015	Attack by armed terrorist organization against village	Abduction	1	GPCA — MA — SARC — KRC — UNHCR
47	Shim'on Sumu Sumo	Tall Hurmuz	3	2	–	23/02/2015	Attack by armed terrorist organization against village	Killing	–	GPCA — MA — SARC — KRC — UNHCR
48	Fu'ad Oshana Yunan	Tall Hurmuz	6	5	2 females	23/02/2015	Attack by armed terrorist organization against village	Abduction	1	GPCA — MA — SARC — KRC — UNHCR
49	Iliya Isho Yunan	Tall Hurmuz	3	2	1 female	23/02/2015	Attack by armed terrorist organization against village	Abduction	1	GPCA — MA — SARC — KRC — UNHCR
50	Asmo Yukhanna Yukhanna	Tall Hurmuz	4	3	1 male, 1 female	23/02/2015	Attack by armed terrorist organization against village	Abduction	2	GPCA — MA — SARC — KRC — UNHCR
51	Darmo Oda Oda	Tall Hurmuz	5	3	1 male, 2 females	23/02/2015	Attack by armed terrorist organization against village	Abduction	1	GPCA — MA — SARC — KRC — UNHCR
52	Rami Saqiq Isma'il	Tall al-Jazirah	3	1	1 male	23/02/2015	Attack by armed terrorist organization against village	Abduction	3	–
53	Sami Adam	Tall Baz	5	3	1 male	23/02/2015	Attack by armed terrorist organization against village	Murder of the son, Milad	–	–
54	Maryam Kako Yusuf	Tall Fuwaydat	1	1	–	23/02/2015	Attack by armed terrorist organization against village	Abduction	1	–
55	Yusuf Kambar Sarkis	Tall Fuwaydat	3	2	–	23/02/2015	Attack by armed terrorist organization against village	Abduction	1	GPCA — MA — SARC — KRC — UNHCR

No.	Full name	Village	Number of people in household	Number of women in household	Number and sex of children	Date of departure	Reason for departure	Type of violation experienced	Number of family lost	Entity contacted for services
56	Albert Wardah Abdal	Kabrshamiyah	2	1	–	23/02/2015	Attack by armed terrorist organization against village	Abduction	2	–
57	Oya Yukanna Hurmuz	Kabrshamiyah	–	–	–	23/02/2015	Attack by armed terrorist organization against village	–	–	GPCA — MA — SARC — KRC — UNHCR
58	Ninus Yusuf Sarkis	Tall Fuwaydat	4	1	2 males	23/02/2015	Attack by armed terrorist organization against village	Abduction	3	GPCA — MA — SARC — KRC — UNHCR
59	Qarbah Tall Shamiran	Tall Fuwaydat	–	–	–	23/02/2015	Attack by armed terrorist organization against village	All families in the village abducted	50 families	–

List of persons abducted by ISIL and subsequently released

	Name	*Father's name*	*Mother's name*	*Place and year of birth*	
1	Jamil Kuliyat	Kifarkis	Marin Tawir	Tall Kawran	1963
2	Nabil Mirza	Wikram	Almaz	Tall Kawran	1965
3	Ilyas Mirza	Mikha'il	Bassah Kifarkis	Thawrah	1978
4	Mirza Mirza	Khaya	Kutah	Iraq	1924
5	Salim Dashtu	Andrawus	Mandusah Mirza	Tall Kawran	1959
6	Mikha'il Mirza	Khaya	Kutah	Tall Kawran	1942
7	Yukhanis Adam	Adam	Biyastah Kandalo	Tall Kawran	1953
8	Georges Odisho	Tato	Kalisiyah Janku	Tall Kawran	1986
9	Tato Odisho	Odisho	Asiyat	Tall Kawran	1946
10	Georges Isma'il	Isho	Maryam Yalda	Tall Kawran	1959
11	Isma'il Isma'il	Isho	Maryam Yalda	Tall Kawran	1963
12	Joseph Isma'il	Isho	Maryam Yalda	Tall Kawran	1966
13	Abdu Mirza	Mirza	Maryam Thomas	Tall Kawran	1976
14	Miriam Mirza	Abdu	Ishtar	Tall Kawran	2009
15	Shirna Mirza	Khaya	Kutah Athnil	Tall Kawran	1932
16	Zamo Mirza	Khaya	Kutah Athnil	Tall Kawran	1941
17	Yu'il Mirza	Abram	Esther Matlub	Tall Kawran	1958
18	Najmah Yukhanna	Isho	Asmar Warda	Abu Tinah	1962
19	Oya Zaya	Abram	Esther Matlub	Tall Kawran	1955
20	Yusuf Zaya	Oya	Yuniyah Ishaq	Tall Kawran	1985
21	Jamil Odisho	Yalda	Sabaniya Sawa	Tall Kawran	1973
22	Yatrun Marko	Azriya		Tall Shamiram	1957
23	Wardiya Yunan	Aram		Tall Shamiram	1957

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Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 39 of Security Council resolution 2147 (2014). It covers major developments in the Democratic Republic of the Congo since my reports of 30 December 2014 (S/2014/956 and S/2014/957), including with regard to the implementation of national commitments under the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region and progress made by the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) in implementing its mandate.

II. Major developments

A. Political developments

2. Controversy over the revision of the electoral law marked the extraordinary session of Parliament that concluded on 26 January. The Government submitted to the Parliament a draft electoral law that conditioned the holding of the 2016 presidential and legislative elections on updated demographic data to be obtained through a population census. The last census was undertaken in 1984. The political opposition interpreted the clause as an attempt to delay the 2016 elections and allow the President, Joseph Kabila Kabange, to remain in power beyond his second and last term according to the Constitution. Opposition parties boycotted the vote on the draft law on 17 January. The National Assembly nevertheless passed the text. In protest, the political opposition called for demonstrations.

3. On 19 January, student protests and street demonstrations broke out in various neighbourhoods in Kinshasa and other cities, including Bukavu, Goma, Lubumbashi, Mbandaka and Mbuji-Mayi. Demonstrations continued during the following days, evolving into a larger protest movement, spearheaded by youths, against the controversial clause in the law.

4. In Kinshasa, police stations, town halls and Chinese businesses were looted and vehicles burned, and some administrative buildings were set on fire in Goma.

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The Government promptly deployed riot police and troops, including the Republican Guard, to respond to the protests. Disproportionate force was used in some instances and there were reports of alleged human rights violations committed by the national security forces. MONUSCO documented the killing of at least 20 civilians and the wounding of 64 others by the police and the Republican Guard from 19 to 23 January in Kinshasa and Goma. Figures from the Government and various human rights non-governmental organizations were higher, putting the number of deaths at 27 and 42, respectively. At least 480 individuals across the country, many from the political opposition, were arrested. The police reportedly prevented several leaders of the opposition from leaving their party headquarters to join the demonstrations. In Goma, demonstrations resulted in clashes between the police and demonstrators, killing four civilians. In Bukavu (South Kivu), the police used tear gas to prevent demonstrators from marching. In Lubumbashi (Katanga), the police reportedly arrested 13 members of the Union pour la démocratie et le progrès social at the party's local headquarters.

5. On 20 January, the Catholic archbishop of Kinshasa, Cardinal Laurent Monsengwo, urged the Government to stop using disproportionate force against demonstrators, while calling on the population to continue opposing the modification of the electoral law through peaceful means. On the same day, the Government suspended Internet, social media and text messaging services in an effort to prevent the organization of further demonstrations. Internet and text messaging services were restored on 8 February, but major social media services remained suspended. The Government also ordered the temporary closure of two private television stations in Kinshasa and suspended the broadcasting of Radio France Internationale.

6. From the outset, MONUSCO leaders worked actively with key political and civil society stakeholders and in close coordination with other international partners to restore calm. In a statement issued on 21 January, MONUSCO called for all political actors to refrain from violence and for the national security forces to abide by the principle of proportionate use of force. On 22 January, I called on all key stakeholders to resume the political dialogue to discuss election-related matters in an inclusive and peaceful fashion and in the appropriate forums. The Security Council and my team of special envoys and special representatives echoed the appeal on the same day.

7. On 22 January, the Senate passed the bill after having removed the clause referring to the population census. The protests subsided nationwide following the announcement by the President of the National Assembly, Aubin Minaku, on 24 January, that there was agreement on removing the contentious clause. The revised text of the electoral law was adopted by both houses of Parliament on 25 January and was promulgated by the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo on 12 February.

8. The debate on the electoral law and the final decision of the Parliament to adopt the law without the controversial provision accentuated divisions within the ruling presidential majority coalition. On 9 February, following earlier calls by some key stakeholders from within the ruling coalition against a constitutional revision, former Prime Minister Antoine Gizenga from the Parti lumumbiste unifié condemned the violence and killings during the demonstrations in January and called for elections to be held within the constitutional time frame. At the same

time, some parties of the ruling coalition held peaceful demonstrations in Beni (North Kivu) and in Bukavu and Uvira (South Kivu) in support of the President.

9. Representatives of the political opposition and civil society continued to voice concerns about the lack of political space and about cases of arbitrary arrest and detention. At least 300 people remain in detention as a result of mass arrests carried out during the protests in January. Of those people, at least 11 are believed to be held in detention incommunicado. Prominent civil society representative Christopher Ngoyi Mutamba was arrested on 21 January in Kinshasa. On 11 February, he was charged with 10 criminal offences, including with threatening the internal security of the State. On 28 January, the Supreme Court of Justice in Kinshasa declared itself competent to decide on the merits of a defamation case against the President of the opposition party Union pour la nation congolaise, Vital Kamerhe. The decision to move forward with the trial was perceived by his supporters as a deliberate attempt to prevent him from running in the 2016 presidential elections and provoked some spontaneous demonstrations in Bukavu (South Kivu).

10. On 12 February, the national independent electoral commission published a global electoral calendar. In accordance with that calendar, combined local and provincial elections are to be held on 25 October 2015, while presidential and legislative elections are scheduled for 27 November 2016. The publication of the calendar was well received by national stakeholders and international partners as an important step towards the holding of timely elections, although some opposition parties questioned its feasibility.

B. Progress in the implementation of national commitments under the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region

Decentralization

11. The most significant progress in the implementation of national commitments under the Framework was made in the area of decentralization. In December 2014, a minister in charge of decentralization was appointed and, on 25 January, the Parliament passed two essential laws, one delimiting the new boundaries of the 25 provinces and one establishing the new provinces. In accordance with the Constitution, the provinces of Bandundu, Equateur, Kasai occidental, Kasai oriental, Katanga and Orientale will be split, while the other provinces will maintain their current delimitation.

12. The law envisages the setting up of a commission charged with establishing the new entities in each new province. The commissions were given some 120 days to complete the process. The Government will have five years to conduct the necessary rehabilitation and infrastructure work for the new provincial administrations to become operational. At the provincial level, the adoption of the legislation increased political tensions, particularly in Katanga, where the delimitations of the new provinces were contested by some key political stakeholders and certain local communities. Others were vehemently in favour.

Consolidation of State authority and stabilization

13. Some progress was made in the development of provincial stabilization strategies and action plans for North Kivu, Orientale and South Kivu under the framework of the International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy. In all three provinces, consensus was reached on concrete steps to be taken by the Government and international partners, based on a joint vision, to increase the effectiveness and sustainability of stabilization activities in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. In Mambasa (Orientale), the second pilot project under the Strategy, funded by the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund, was launched by the governor on 10 February.

Governance reforms

14. Efforts to further financial reforms and economic development continued with the adoption of important legislation. On 14 January, the Parliament passed a bill liberalizing the insurance sector that is expected to improve the business climate in that sector. The Parliament adopted other legislative texts, including a hydrocarbon law, a law on leasing and a set of five laws ratifying bilateral treaties on the Grand Inga Dam project and on the protection of investments.

C. Security situation

15. In North Kivu, the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) and other unidentified armed elements continued to pose a significant threat to civilians in the area of Beni. Although progress was made by the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo — FARDC) against ADF in Beni territory, where the group was forced out of most of its positions, the ADF command structure appeared to remain intact. ADF is now dispersed in small groups and its combatants are resorting to guerrilla warfare tactics. On 3 February, 24 civilians were brutally killed by machete by suspected ADF elements. On 16 February, one civilian was killed and one was kidnapped by alleged ADF elements north-east of Butembo. Since October 2014, MONUSCO has documented the brutal killing of at least 269 civilians by suspected ADF elements and other unidentified armed elements in Beni territory. In response to the most recent killings, the Governor of North Kivu temporarily relocated to Beni to coordinate the Government's response to the continued attacks on the civilian population.

16. In anticipation of FARDC operations, increased movements by elements of the Forces démocratiques pour la libération du Rwanda (FDLR) were observed in North Kivu and South Kivu. It was reported that those elements continued to commit human rights violations, including looting, kidnapping and forced recruitment of children. On 11 February, FDLR elements ambushed a FARDC patrol near Nyamilima, killing two soldiers and wounding three. The redeployment of FARDC units in preparation for operations against FDLR created security vacuums in certain areas of Masisi and Walikale territories. This situation was exploited by other armed groups and caused the displacement of some civilians.

17. During the reporting period, Mayi-Mayi Raia Mutomboki factions in South Kivu continued to operate in the vicinity of mining sites in Shabunda territory, causing the displacement of civilians. In the southern part of the province, FARDC,

with the support of MONUSCO, continued to carry out operations against the Forces nationales de libération du Burundi (FNL) and other armed groups.

18. In Orientale, renewed activity by elements of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) was reported in Dungu territory, Haut Uélé district. Six people, including two FARDC soldiers, were reportedly killed during 10 separate attacks and, as at 15 February, dozens of civilians were allegedly abducted. Most of the attacks consisted of road ambushes carried out by small groups of highly mobile, armed LRA elements who moved together with abducted women and children. It is believed that much of LRA has been present in a wide area of Haut Uélé and Bas Uélé districts since mid-2014. LRA continued to be active in and around Garamba National Park and is involved in poaching activities and ivory trafficking.

19. On 2 January, the Congolese authorities arrested the leader of the Forces de résistance patriotiques de l'Ituri (FRPI), Justin Banaloki (alias Cobra Matata), while he was attempting to escape house arrest in Bunia, Ituri district (Orientale). On 5 January, Cobra Matata was transferred from Bunia to Kinshasa with MONUSCO support and is currently detained at N'dolo military prison. He is accused of desertion, forming a rebel movement, crimes against humanity, war crimes, child recruitment and attempting to escape from detention. Negotiations with the Government for his surrender and the surrender of 812 combatants failed, as Cobra Matata insisted on a general amnesty for himself and his men as well as FRPI integration into FARDC with recognition of those men's ranks. Two weeks after the expiration of a deadline given by the Government for FRPI to surrender, on 15 January fighting broke out between FARDC and some 900 armed elements of FRPI. The clash resulted in the killing of seven FARDC soldiers and 24 FRPI elements. One civilian was killed and four other civilians, including three women, were seriously injured. Around 15,000 people were displaced from their homes. FRPI subsequently left its position in Aveba, splintering into several groups and resuming hit-and-run attacks on villages, thereby posing a renewed threat to civilian life and property in the area. Between 16 and 17 February, FRPI carried out several attacks on a number of villages. In Rwampara-Manje, three persons were injured, while in Mbetsi two women were killed. FRPI also reportedly abducted and raped 10 women in Walendu.

20. In Katanga, the security and humanitarian situation deteriorated further owing to the continued activities of Kata Katanga militia, in spite of continuing FARDC operations against the group, and as a result of intercommunal clashes between the Twa and the Luba communities in several territories of Tanganyika district. On 13 February, during intercommunal attacks in Manono, nine civilians were killed and several women were abducted. In Katanga, approximately 560,000 persons remain internally displaced.

21. In Equateur, the security situation in the border area remained tense owing to the spillover from the conflict in the Central African Republic. Some 10 anti-balaka and ex-Séléka elements were arrested by the Congolese national police and repatriated to the Central African Republic.

D. Humanitarian situation

22. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 7 million people require humanitarian assistance to meet their basic needs, of whom nearly 2.8 million are internally displaced. About 85 per cent of internally displaced persons live with host families.

The rest live in camps. On 5 February, a humanitarian action plan was launched in Kinshasa, requiring $692 million to address the prioritized needs of 5.2 million people affected by four types of crisis: conflict; malnutrition; epidemics; and natural disasters. The humanitarian community continues to provide aid to people in need. In the area of Beni (North Kivu), 8,000 of the 17,700 families displaced as a result of atrocities committed by ADF received humanitarian assistance.

23. As at 31 December 2014, an estimated 6.5 million people in the Democratic Republic of the Congo were in a situation of acute food security and livelihood crisis. In addition, 43 per cent of children under the age of 5 were stunted because of chronic malnutrition.

24. Some 443,000 Congolese continue to live as refugees and asylum seekers in neighbouring countries, while the Democratic Republic of the Congo hosts some 122,000 refugees, including more than 68,000 from the Central African Republic, 40,000 from Rwanda, 9,000 from Burundi and 4,000 from other countries. As at 5 February, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) registered 19,289 additional refugees from the Central African Republic in Equateur. Efforts are under way to identify and register an estimated 245,000 Rwandan refugees in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. The identification exercise conducted by the National Commission for Refugees between November 2013 and January 2014 resulted in the registration of 245,298 Rwandan refugees. The Commission and UNHCR are now planning a biometric registration exercise that will enable better protection and assistance. It is estimated that the registration will cost $2.4 million. The United States Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration has pledged $1 million in support of this process.

E. Economic developments

25. Macroeconomic performance remained stable and inflation at below 2 per cent. Growth continued to be driven essentially by increases in mining output and, to some extent, higher production in the agricultural sector. The main risk to the economic outlook arises from reduced inflows of foreign direct investment owing to political instability and a decline in copper and cobalt prices, which account for about 98 per cent of exported goods and 44 per cent of nominal gross domestic product. On 31 December 2014, the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo promulgated the 2015 budget law, with a budget amounting to $9.07 billion, which represents an increase of 2 per cent compared with the 2014 budget.

F. Regional developments

26. Relations in the region remained strained over the issue of FDLR and the implementation of the Nairobi Declarations of 12 December 2013. The deadline that was set by the International Conference for the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and endorsed by the Security Council for the voluntary disarmament of FDLR expired on 2 January. In a statement issued on that date, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo noted that since only 26 per cent of the estimated 1,400 FDLR elements in the country had surrendered, military operations had become inevitable. The ICGLR, SADC and international partners echoed that conclusion. South Africa and

the United Republic of Tanzania confirmed their full support for military operations against FDLR in separate statements issued on 9 and 13 January.

27. There was limited progress in implementing the Nairobi Declarations. The coordinator for the Movement of 23 March (M23), René Abandi, resigned on 12 January, accusing the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo of having violated the agreements. By the end of the reporting period, 182 of an estimated 1,678 ex-M23 elements had been voluntarily repatriated to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Following the repatriation of a first group of 120 ex-M23 elements on 16 December 2014, some 1,100 ex-M23 elements remained in the Bihanga cantonment camp in Uganda, with the majority of them reportedly reluctant to being repatriated. As part of efforts to expedite the repatriation of the 453 registered ex-M23 elements and their weapons from Rwanda, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo dispatched a technical team to Kigali from 2 to 4 February to discuss the modalities. In a joint communiqué issued on 3 February, both Governments reiterated their willingness to respect the international obligations contained in the Framework and the Nairobi Declarations.

28. The third evaluation meeting on the implementation of the Nairobi Declarations was held in Kinshasa on 11 February under the chairmanship of the Executive Coordinator of the National Oversight Mechanism of the Framework. It was agreed to dispatch a Government-led multidisciplinary team to Uganda with a view to expediting and concluding the repatriation of ex-M23 elements and their weapons. The participants in the meeting reiterated the need for measures envisaged in the Declarations to build confidence between the parties, including through the creation of commissions on expropriated property and national reconciliation and the release of ex-M23 detainees by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

III. Mandate implementation

A. National processes and the good offices role of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

29. MONUSCO continued to support the Government in implementing its national commitments under the Framework. The controversy over the electoral law and the violent protests in Kinshasa and elsewhere in the country underscored the importance of the Mission's good offices role and quiet diplomacy efforts in the context of the electoral process. Political parties from the opposition and the ruling coalition, as well as civil society actors, called upon MONUSCO to facilitate a political dialogue with a view to de-escalating tensions and creating conditions conducive to the holding of credible and timely elections. To that end, MONUSCO intensified contacts and exchanges with stakeholders across the political spectrum.

30. MONUSCO continued to provide support to the National Oversight Mechanism in monitoring, implementing and evaluating the national commitments.

31. MONUSCO strengthened its capacity to provide advice and support to the Government on security and justice sector reform with specialized expertise in the areas of internal security sector governance, private security companies, internal accountability and police reform, parliamentary oversight, and defence reform.

Regular meetings were held with key international partners with a view to enhancing coherence in both the assistance and advice that is being provided to the Government.

32. With regard to the reform of the national police, a national training strategy was developed and submitted for the approval of the Commissioner General. Sixty national police officers deployed in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo completed a training programme aimed at preventing sexual violence with the support of MONUSCO and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The Mission continued to provide support to the inspectorate general of the police with a view to enhancing its capacity to process complaints. MONUSCO and UNDP also continued to support the implementation of a joint justice support programme, the main objectives of which are the development of a national action plan for the reform of the Congolese justice system and the provision of assistance for the establishment of an effective constitutional court that will be in charge of settling disputes arising from the general elections scheduled for 2016. Funds to support the programme will be mobilized in the framework of the Global Focal Point for the Police, Justice and Corrections arrangements.

33. Continuous advocacy led to the national authorities agreeing to revise the prison reform plan and develop a nationwide curriculum for prison officers. A quarterly plan was developed focusing on prison staff capacity-building, following the validation of 11 training modules on 12 February. Efforts are under way for the establishment of a steering committee on prison matters and MONUSCO continues to provide technical advice and assistance on the general management and operation of prisons in areas freed from armed groups. The lack of adequate resources and capacity within the Government and the United Nations country team on corrections-related matters remains a concern. In that regard, given the critical role of the Mission in the handover of corrections-related tasks, MONUSCO continues to support the Congolese authorities in efforts to establish functional, professional and accountable judicial and security institutions, including safe, secure and humane prisons.

34. MONUSCO continued its efforts in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo to support the extension of State authority to areas freed from armed groups through the provision of assistance to the provincial authorities. These early stabilization efforts are supported by 72 quick-impact projects with a value of approximately $4.2 million, focusing on the restoration of State authority.

B. Neutralization of armed groups

35. In support of the national authorities, MONUSCO carried out targeted joint offensive operations to prevent the expansion of armed groups and to neutralize and disarm them. MONUSCO focused its efforts on operations against ADF, FDLR, FNL, FRPI and Mayi-Mayi groups.

36. In the area of Beni (North Kivu), MONUSCO supported FARDC operations targeting ADF elements. Between 5 and 16 January, five ADF elements surrendered and three were arrested. Between 1 and 12 January, MONUSCO and FARDC forces mounted Operation Umoja II, which resulted in the killing of seven ADF elements, the seizure of five weapons and the recovery of several documents that provided information on the group. The operation also dislodged ADF from five different camps around Medina, where the armed group used to have its headquarters. Operation Umoja III, which was launched by MONUSCO and FARDC on 25 January,

is ongoing. The MONUSCO framework brigades and the Force Intervention Brigade are engaged in these operations.

37. On 29 January, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo announced the launch of military operations against FDLR. The Mission supported FARDC in planning operations against FDLR and prepositioned MONUSCO troops and its Force Intervention Brigade with a view to better assisting FARDC operations. Joint mission planning covered military, police and civilian activities, coordinated with humanitarian contingency planning, taking into account lessons learned from previous operations. On 11 and 13 February, MONUSCO notified the Government that, in view of allegations of human rights violations against generals recently appointed to lead the operations, it would not be in a position to support them, in line with the human rights due diligence policy on United Nations support to non-United Nations security forces. On 15 February, the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo indicated that FARDC would carry out military operations against FDLR without MONUSCO support. Towards the end of February, FARDC launched operations against FDLR in various parts of North Kivu and South Kivu. The Minister of Information and Spokesperson of the Government, Lambert Mende, announced on 1 March that FARDC had captured several FDLR combatants, including two majors. A number of FDLR combatants were also reportedly killed.

38. An operation against FNL in South Kivu was planned and executed jointly by FARDC and MONUSCO in January, as a precursor to operations against FDLR. The operations forced FNL and Mayi-Mayi groups in South Kivu out of their stronghold in the Ruzizi plain. The operations resulted in the surrender of 64 Mayi-Mayi Raya Mutomboki and seven FNL elements. On 24 February, in follow-up to those operations, FARDC launched operations against FDLR in Uvira territory (South Kivu). Three FDLR elements were reportedly captured.

39. In Ituri district, Orientale, MONUSCO planned and executed, jointly with FARDC operations targeting FRPI after the arrest of Cobra Matata on 2 January. In Orientale, MONUSCO continued to provide logistical, operational and information-sharing support to FARDC troops operating under the African Union Regional Task Force against LRA. MONUSCO conducted joint operations with FARDC and the Task Force — with support from the United States Africa Command — in the western part of Garamba National Park and provided logistics and information-gathering assistance. Following the operations, 15 LRA dependants escaped and five LRA commanders are currently negotiating their surrender.

C. Protection of civilians

40. MONUSCO continued its efforts to protect civilians in key areas of concern in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, including by conducting patrols, both during the day and at night, and providing escorts to humanitarian actors, United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and non-governmental organizations.

41. MONUSCO also stepped up efforts to protect civilians through increased interaction with the local population and advocacy efforts with local and national authorities. The United Nations system revised its strategy for the protection of civilians in December 2014 with the aim of better coordinating activities between MONUSCO and the United Nations country team and supporting the Government's efforts to fulfil its obligations with regard to the protection of civilians.

42. More than 50 local protection committees in five provinces received around 270 early warning alerts. MONUSCO responded in 21 per cent of the cases; 46 per cent of the alerts were conveyed to the national security forces and 14 per cent to local civilian authorities. In the remaining 19 per cent of cases, the alerts proved either false or were received after the incident. In approximately 40 per cent of cases, violations against civilians were prevented.

43. In North Kivu, MONUSCO established a provincial early warning analysis and response cell to enhance its efforts to protect civilians, and placed human rights investigation teams on standby to be deployed within 48 hours of notice. Alerts from the cell contributed to the redeployment of FARDC soldiers in some areas of concern in Walikale and Masisi territories, and enhanced monitoring and patrolling activities by MONUSCO. The Mission conducted awareness-raising activities on the early warning networks in areas that could be affected by military operations against FDLR and worked with some 90 communities in North Kivu to improve local early warning systems. Two joint assessment missions, including representatives of the Mission's civilian and police components and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), were conducted on the Kiwanja-Nyamilima and Nyanzale-Kibirizi axes, Rutshuru territory, to assess protection concerns relating to Operation Sukola II and to monitor the implementation of relevant contingency plans. The findings were shared with the FARDC command.

44. In Beni (North Kivu), MONUSCO increased its patrolling activity along the Beni-Boikene-Mavivi-Oicha-Eringeti road, the axis affected by ADF activities, while readjusting the deployment of MONUSCO forces in the area with a particular focus on strategic locations such as Butembo, Eringeti, Kamango, Lubero and Similiki bridge.

D. Safety and security of United Nations personnel within the context of operations of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

45. In Beni, a United Nations formed police unit was pelted with stones during a night patrol on 16 February, seriously injuring one police officer. In other parts of the country, MONUSCO military operations did not result in any discernible increase in threats to United Nations personnel.

E. Monitoring the implementation of the arms embargo

46. The FARDC and MONUSCO recovered 487 automatic weapons and 1,251 rounds of 7.62-mm ammunition, which were handed over or left behind by elements of various armed groups, including Mayi-Mayi Nyatura, the Forces de défense des droits humains, the Alliance des patriotes pour un Congo libre et souverain and Mayi-Mayi Lafontaine. Most of the weapons used by armed groups in the Democratic Republic of the Congo were reportedly acquired from within the country or trafficked from Burundi, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania. On 25 February, the MONUSCO Force Intervention Brigade carried out a verification mission of 190 weapons recovered from armed groups to ascertain their origin, serial number and serviceability. Information related to the identification of

arms and ammunition recovered was systematically shared with the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo for traceability purposes.

F. Disarmament, demobilization, reintegration, repatriation and resettlement

47. As at 19 February, 98 members of Congolese armed groups and 102 members of foreign armed groups participated in the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration, repatriation and resettlement programme. Of those, 80 were combatants, including 70 from FDLR, while 70 were children associated with armed groups, 40 were dependants and 10 were civilians. The children associated with armed groups were released and placed in transit centres pending their family tracing, reunification and social integration by UNICEF and its partners. As at 19 February, 339 FDLR combatants, including 17 officers, and 1,119 of their dependants had voluntarily disarmed. MONUSCO continued to provide food, water and medicine to the combatants and dependants in the assembly camps in Kanyabayonga (North Kivu) and Walungu (South Kivu), while the Government is responsible for the management of the transit camp in Kisangani (Orientale).

48. Funding for the third national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration plan remains a concern. The Government has yet to make available the full $10 million it has pledged. On 27 January, the Government indicated it would make a first disbursement of $1.5 million, but has yet to do so. The disbursement of contributions from the World Bank and other donors is conditional upon the contribution of the Government. MONUSCO plans to contribute $6 million. The delay in launching the programme has prolonged the long-term cantonment of former combatants at pre-disarmament, demobilization and reintegration camps in Kamina, Kitona and Kotakoli, thus delaying their demobilization and reintegration and preventing other armed elements from laying down their weapons.

G. Mine action

49. The Mine Action Service of the United Nations undertook 376 operations in North Kivu, Orientale and South Kivu. A total of 1,500 items of explosive remnants of war were destroyed, as were 30 weapons and 80 rounds of small arms ammunition collected from former FDLR combatants in Walungu (South Kivu). In keeping with the revised concept for the protection of civilians from explosive remnants of war, the Mine Action Service assisted the MONUSCO Force Intervention Brigade in providing operational support to FARDC-led operations.

H. Promotion and protection of human rights and the fight against impunity

50. MONUSCO also supported the transfer of 29 inmates at high risk of escaping, including Lieutenant Colonel Bedi Engangela (alias Colonel 106), who was sentenced on 15 December 2014 by the South Kivu military court to life imprisonment for war crimes and crimes against humanity, to more secure facilities as a measure to address the persistent prison security concerns.

51. In accordance with the human rights due diligence policy on United Nations support to non-United Nations security forces, MONUSCO screened the human rights records of 124 FARDC and national police commanders and deputy commanders, including 116 FARDC officers and eight police elements upon the receipt of requests for support to their respective units. Of the 124 records screened, those of seven officers and the members of units under their command were deemed ineligible for support because of their background and because there were substantial grounds for believing that they might commit grave human rights violations. Twelve requests pertained to joint military operations in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, while 26 were related to other forms of support, such as transport on United Nations assets, fuel, rations and training. Effective 13 February, MONUSCO suspended the provision of support to FARDC units involved in Operation Sukola II (against FDLR) owing to concerns about the human rights records of two generals assigned on 25 January to lead operations in North Kivu, including operations against FDLR. While FARDC has, for the time being, ceased to cooperate with MONUSCO on operations against FDLR, MONUSCO cooperation with FARDC on operations against other armed groups, in particular ADF, has continued. Cooperation with the Congolese national police is also ongoing.

52. Through its prosecution support cells, MONUSCO continued to provide technical and logistical support to military justice authorities to investigate and prosecute for war crimes, crimes against humanity and other serious crimes alleged to have been committed by rebel groups and FARDC elements, including commanders in Katanga, North Kivu, Orientale and South Kivu provinces. MONUSCO facilitated investigation missions and the convening of mobile courts in Beni-Butembo, Bunia, Eringenti, Gety, Kasenyi, Kitchanga, Kolwezi, Likasi, Lubero, Mambasa, Mbau, Oicha, South-Irumu and Uvira. MONUSCO also monitored the criminal proceedings in Katanga against 67 followers of the political opponent and religious leader Pasteur Mukungubila, who were arrested in connection with attacks against government facilities in Kinshasa, Kindu and Lubumbashi on 30 December 2013.

I. Sexual violence

53. In January, MONUSCO recorded 15 cases of sexual violence in conflict, including eight cases in North Kivu alone. The main perpetrators were elements of armed groups, who were reportedly responsible for sexual violence against 10 of the 15 women victims. FDLR and FRPI were responsible for three and four cases, respectively. FARDC was reportedly responsible for sexual violence against the remaining five victims.

54. MONUSCO supported the establishment of the committee overseeing the implementation of the FARDC action plan against sexual violence. In the framework of a joint project on preventing and responding to sexual violence in North Kivu, Orientale and South Kivu, MONUSCO and UNDP funded and organized a three-month training programme on the instruction and investigation of sexual violence cases for 60 judicial police officers assigned to a special force for the protection of women and children. On 18 and 19 February, in Kinshasa, the FARDC Commission on Sexual Violence held a technical meeting with the support of the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict, UNDP

and MONUSCO to review and adopt the FARDC action plan on combating conflict-related sexual violence.

J. Child protection

55. As at 13 February, MONUSCO had documented 298 cases of children (18 girls and 280 boys), including one Rwandan, who had escaped or were separated from armed groups. Sixty-nine were separated from the Forces démocratiques pour la libération du Rwanda-Forces combattantes Abacunguzi, 43 from Mayi-Mayi Raia Mutomboki and 30 from Mayi-Mayi Nyatura. Furthermore, five children formerly associated with armed groups who had been detained by FARDC, were released. In line with the joint action plan of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Nations on ending and preventing child recruitment by armed groups, the Mission screened 154 FARDC troops and no children were identified. Four children were killed and four others were maimed by parties to the conflict in North Kivu, South Kivu and Orientale.

56. Having received reports that at least 35 per cent of FRPI elements were children, from 7 to 14 January MONUSCO conducted field visits in Aveba (Orientale) to advocate for the separation of children from FRPI. Negotiations with the FRPI leadership aimed at achieving the release of the children failed because the commanders claimed that there were no children among their ranks.

IV. Observations

57. The violent protests that took place from 17 to 23 January in Kinshasa, Goma and several other cities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo were a stark reminder that the electoral process is unfolding in a sensitive political environment fraught with tensions. I deplore the loss of lives, injury and destruction of property. It is the right of the Congolese people to demonstrate peacefully. Violence is not acceptable. It is the responsibility of the Government to allow and guarantee the peaceful expression of opinion. Demonstrators and their leaders must ensure that political objectives are pursued by non-violent means. Any response by the national security forces to violent protests must remain proportionate. I urge the Government to investigate the violence and take judicial or disciplinary measures against those responsible.

58. Restrictions on the freedoms of expression, association and assembly and the excessive use of force risk undermining public confidence in the credibility of the electoral process. I call on the Government to maintain the necessary political space. I urge all key stakeholders to resume political dialogue and discuss election-related matters in an inclusive and peaceful fashion, in the appropriate forums. My Special Representative stands ready to use his good offices to help narrow the gap between the main actors. I welcome the publication of a comprehensive electoral calendar, which is an important tool for keeping the process on track and ensuring that credible and timely elections will be held in accordance with the Constitution. It is now essential for the national institutions and all parties and partners to ensure that elections take place as scheduled and that all stakeholders accept the process. To this end, I encourage the Government and the political opposition to enter into a constructive dialogue with a view to building consensus around key electoral decisions, including funding and preparation of the voters' list.

59. There will be no solution to the problems in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo if the regional dimension is not addressed. I am concerned that the lack of progress in addressing the problem of FDLR and fully implementing the Nairobi Declarations will further strain regional relations and undermine the resolve of the signatories to implement their commitments under the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region. I urge all stakeholders to work with my Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, Said Djinnit, to restore momentum and recommit to ending once and for all conflict and instability in the region.

60. FDLR remains a threat to the stability of eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region. I welcome the commitment of the Government, subregional organizations and key troop-contributing countries to taking decisive action against FDLR, including through the launching by the FARDC of military operations. I also welcome the Government's determination to lead efforts in neutralizing FDLR. MONUSCO will continue to work closely with the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to implement the mandate entrusted to it by the Security Council. The Mission stands ready to support these operations in accordance with the human rights due diligence policy on United Nations support to non-United Nations security forces. Respect for international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law constitutes one of the core values of the United Nations and a cornerstone of all United Nations activity. Neutralizing FDLR is a goal shared by the Government, the region and the United Nations. There is no purely military solution to the problem of FDLR, but there will be no solution without effective military pressure. Achieving results in operations against FDLR will require time and the continued commitment and effort of all stakeholders, including the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and regional actors.

61. I am appalled by the continued atrocities committed by ADF and other armed elements in the area of Beni (North Kivu). I commend the determination of FARDC to neutralize this armed group under difficult conditions and welcome its cooperation with MONUSCO in operations against ADF. As outlined in my previous report to the Security Council (S/2014/957), MONUSCO is taking steps to enhance the effectiveness of both its Force Intervention Brigade and its framework brigades to better implement its mandate of neutralizing armed groups and protecting civilians. Offering sustainable alternatives to former combatants and extending State authority to areas freed from armed groups are an essential part of neutralizing armed groups. This requires the commitment of the Government to work in partnership with MONUSCO to address the underlying causes of conflict, such as governance issues and the illegal exploitation of natural resources by advancing key reforms and investigating, prosecuting and sanctioning those engaged in the national and transnational organized crime and illicit trade that fuels conflict.

62. I am concerned about the continued human rights violations and abuses taking place throughout the country. Armed groups and elements of the national security forces continue to commit human rights abuses, including rape, extrajudicial killings, violations against minors, arbitrary arrest, torture and abduction. I encourage the Government to expedite ongoing initiatives to protect and promote human rights and address impunity in cooperation with MONUSCO and other relevant partners.

63. As I recommended in my previous report, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo should enter into a strategic dialogue with the United Nations aimed at jointly developing a gradual exit strategy for MONUSCO based on mutually agreed targets for the consolidation of the gains made over the past decade and the long-term stabilization of the country. This dialogue should be viewed as an opportunity to redefine the partnership between the United Nations and the Government and improve cooperation between the two. It is hoped that the dialogue will contribute to facilitating the transfer of tasks from MONUSCO to the Government and accelerate the Mission's exit, taking into account the primary responsibility of the Council for the maintenance of international peace and security and the sovereign rights and responsibilities of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

64. In conclusion, I wish to extend my gratitude to my Special Representative for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Head of MONUSCO, Martin Kobler, and my Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, Said Djinnit, their staff, the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, as well as other international and regional organizations and the troop- and police-contributing countries for their active engagement in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region.

Map

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Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 2147 (2014), in which the Council requested me to report to it on the implementation by the Democratic Republic of the Congo of its commitments under the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region.[1] The report covers developments since the issuance of my report of 24 September 2014 (S/2014/697) and provides a description of peace and security initiatives with regard to the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region before 15 February 2015. It provides an account of progress and challenges in the implementation of the Framework and recommendations to the Council on how best to advance the objectives of the Framework.

II. Recent developments

A. Political and security developments

2. The continuing activities by armed groups in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo notwithstanding, the Great Lakes region as a whole enjoyed relative stability during the reporting period. Two years after the signing of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, however, the agreement is facing significant challenges that hinder its full implementation. They are largely related to limited progress in neutralizing armed groups in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and to persistent mistrust between the leaders of the region. In particular, the lack of meaningful progress in the disarmament of the Forces démocratiques de

[1] In this context, the region is defined as covering the 13 signatories to the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, namely, Angola, Burundi, the Central African Republic, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, South Africa, South Sudan, the Sudan, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia. In addition, the following four intergovernmental organizations act as guarantors for the Framework: the African Union, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, the Southern African Development Community and the United Nations. For further information, see S/2013/119 and S/2013/131, annex.

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libération du Rwanda (FDLR) continued to dominate discussions at the regional and international levels during the reporting period.

3. On 15 September, the Government of South Africa, as Chair of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation and its Troika, hosted a summit in Pretoria that brought together the SADC Troika, composed of Botswana, Malawi and Zimbabwe, and the Troika of the SADC Organ, comprising Lesotho, Namibia and South Africa. The participants endorsed the decisions of the second joint International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR)-SADC ministerial meeting, held in July, namely, that the voluntary surrender and disarmament of FDLR must be completed within a six-month time frame. They called upon the United Nations, in cooperation with the African Union, to play a role in either repatriating those FDLR elements who had voluntarily surrendered or temporarily resettling them in third countries outside the region.

4. On 25 September, ICGLR and SADC jointly convened a meeting of stakeholders on the voluntary disarmament of FDLR, on the margins of the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly. The participants included ministers for foreign affairs and of defence and other senior officials from all the countries in the region, with the exception of Rwanda. My Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, Said Djinnit, and my Special Representative for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Head of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), Martin Kobler, also attended. During the meeting, a road map defining specific steps leading to the completion of the disarmament process was adopted. The steps included a joint ICGLR-SADC mission to the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo to engage with the FDLR leaders and urge the group to comply with the deadline of 2 January to disarm voluntarily or face military action, in accordance with previous decisions of the Heads of State of ICGLR and SADC and Security Council resolutions 2098 (2013) and 2147 (2014).

5. The mission was conducted from 3 to 6 October and was jointly led by the Ambassador of South Africa to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, representing SADC, the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to ICGLR and the Director of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation. Other participants included officials from Angola, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe. Representatives of the Office of my Special Envoy and MONUSCO also participated. While a strong message was delivered to the acting leader of FDLR, Victor Byiringiro, he continued to insist on a political dialogue with Rwanda as a condition for further progress in the disarmament process, a position that the Government of Rwanda has consistently rejected.

6. On 20 October, at the third joint ICGLR-SADC ministerial meeting, held in Luanda, the participants discussed the midterm review of the voluntary disarmament of FDLR, in line with the decisions taken by the Heads of State and Government. They highlighted the lack of meaningful progress and urged FDLR to abide by the deadline of 2 January.

7. At the expiration of the deadline, only 339 of an estimated 1,500 FDLR combatants had surrendered in North Kivu and South Kivu, along with 1,119 dependants. Furthermore, only 17 of those who had surrendered were officers. With regard to equipment, FDLR handed over only 252 weapons, most of which were old and unserviceable. The individuals who surrendered are currently cantoned

at the Lieutenant General Jean-Lucien Bahuma transit camp in Kisangani, Orientale Province. The Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo — FARDC) are providing security for the camp, supplemented by MONUSCO.

8. During the six months granted to the movement to disarm and surrender, FDLR reportedly continued to commit human rights violations, recruit combatants and send mixed signals about its willingness to disarm fully. Victor Byiringiro released several communiqués in which he portrayed FDLR members as Rwandan refugees and demanded a political dialogue with the Government of Rwanda. He also wrote several letters to the United Nations, the African Union, ICGLR and SADC to reiterate the resolve of FDLR to disarm and its desire to engage in a political dialogue in Rwanda. He also raised alleged challenges relating to the disarmament process, including the limited capacity of the transit camps established to receive FDLR combatants.

9. In view of the lack of progress, the Security Council, the witnesses to the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework and the Governments of the region continued to exert diplomatic pressure on FDLR to lay down its weapons peacefully. On 2 January, the team of envoys and representatives for the Great Lakes region, comprising my Special Envoy, my Special Representative for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Head of MONUSCO, the Special Representative of the African Union, Boubacar Diarra, the Special Envoy of the United States of America, Russ Feingold, the Senior Coordinator of the European Union, Koen Vervaeke, and the Special Envoy of Belgium, Frank De Coninck, issued a joint statement in which they called for immediate military action against FDLR by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, supported by MONUSCO and its Force Intervention Brigade. The same day, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo issued a statement in which it stressed that the only option remaining was to use force against FDLR, given that the group had failed to disarm voluntarily before the deadline. A few days later, the Governments of South Africa and the United Republic of Tanzania unequivocally reiterated their readiness to support military operations against FDLR.

10. On 29 January, in Beni, North Kivu, during a joint press briefing attended by the Force Commander of MONUSCO, Lieutenant General Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz, the Chief of the General Staff of FARDC, General Didier Etumba, announced the launch of an FARDC-led military operation (known as Operation Sukola II) to forcefully disarm FDLR. New commanders were appointed to lead both the operation and the thirty-fourth military region, in which the military action would be conducted. MONUSCO had, however, previously identified two newly appointed generals as allegedly bearing command responsibility for human rights violations committed by units under their command. Consequently, in line with the United Nations human rights due diligence policy, MONUSCO informed the Government that it would not be in a position to support the units involved in operations against FDLR as long as they were under the command of the two generals. On 15 February, at a meeting with the diplomatic corps in Kinshasa, the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Joseph Kabila Kabange, indicated that the decision to appoint or remove the generals was a sovereign prerogative and that his Government might forego the support of MONUSCO for the operations against FDLR. As at 15 February, Operation Sukola II had yet to produce meaningful results on the ground. While skirmishes between FARDC and

FDLR were reported in February, they have not yet translated into measurable progress in neutralizing the armed group.

11. With regard to the implementation of the Nairobi Declarations, signed on 12 December 2013 by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Mouvement du 23 mars (M23), the Government has continued to process applications submitted by ex-M23 combatants under the legislation adopted on 11 February 2014. On 3 September, the Government granted amnesty to 191 ex-M23 combatants, 162 of whom were cantoned in Uganda and 29 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. During a consultative meeting convened in Uganda on 1 October by the Executive Secretary of ICGLR, Alphonse Ntumba Luaba, ex-M23 leaders challenged the figures and contended that some of the persons granted amnesty were not from the former M23. Meanwhile, the Government of Uganda urged the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to repatriate all the ex-M23 elements present in Uganda by the end of December, failing which those individuals should apply for refugee status in Uganda.

12. To assess progress in the implementation of the Nairobi Declarations and harmonize views on how to expedite the process, the Congolese National Oversight Mechanism and the ICGLR secretariat organized a meeting in Kinshasa on 7 November, attended by my Special Envoy and my Special Representative, the Special Envoy of the United States and representatives of other international envoys and key partners. The ex-M23 leaders declined to attend on security grounds, notwithstanding the assurances provided by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, MONUSCO, my Special Envoy and ICGLR. During the meeting, the Coordinator of the Mechanism announced that the number of ex-M23 members who had already been granted amnesty had increased to 559. Furthermore, during the most recent meeting of the Regional Oversight Mechanism, held in Addis Ababa on 31 January, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Raymond Tshibanda N'tungamulongo, indicated that 702 ex-M23 members had been granted amnesty.

13. From 5 to 10 December, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo sent a high-level mission to Kampala to discuss the next steps in the repatriation of ex-M23 combatants. Discussions between the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Uganda, Henry Okello Oryem, and the Deputy Minister for International and Regional Cooperation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Franck Mwendi Malila, focused on expediting the repatriation of an estimated 1,300 ex-M23 combatants in Uganda. The ex-M23 leaders did not participate in the bilateral discussions, but were approached separately by the ICGLR secretariat. Subsequently, technical teams from both sides met under the supervision of the chiefs of military intelligence of both countries and agreed on a plan of action, to be carried out from 7 to 25 December. Consequently, 120 ex-M23 elements were repatriated on 16 December and 62 on 30 December. The 182 individuals are currently quartered in the Kamina camp in Katanga Province, pending demobilization.

14. From 2 to 4 February, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo sent a high-level delegation to Kigali to discuss the repatriation of ex-M23 combatants who had fled to Rwanda and the handover of their military equipment to the Congolese authorities. The Congolese delegation was led by the Deputy Minister of Defence, René Nsibu. The Office of my Special Envoy, MONUSCO and ICGLR also participated in the consultations. The Congolese delegation met the

ex-M23 leaders in Rwanda and urged them to encourage all eligible ex-combatants to prepare for voluntary surrender and repatriation. The Deputy Minister gave assurances that all measures would be taken to provide security, food and accommodation to the ex-combatants once they returned to the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

15. At the end of the visit, the Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda issued a joint communiqué in which they reiterated their determination to implement their commitments under the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, expedite the repatriation of ex-M23 elements and hand over their military equipment to the Congolese authorities. The Rwandan authorities also shared with their Congolese counterparts a list of the military equipment confiscated from the ex-M23 elements. Meanwhile, the ex-M23 Coordinator, who had been deeply involved in the signing and implementation of the Nairobi Declarations, resigned on 10 January on the grounds that the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo was not committed to implementing the Declarations. At the time of writing, ex-M23 leaders were continuing to express concern about the security of ex-M23 combatants held in cantonments in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to question the willingness of the Government to fully implement other commitments contained in the Declarations. By contrast, the Government has consistently stated its commitment to fully implementing the Declarations.

16. On 11 February, the Coordinator of the National Oversight Mechanism convened a second meeting on the implementation of the Nairobi Declarations, which was held in Kinshasa. The participants decided, among other things, to accelerate the processing of applications for amnesty from ex-M23 elements. They also agreed to dispatch a delegation to Uganda to resolve any issue delaying the return to the Democratic Republic of the Congo of ex-M23 rebels remaining in that country. A similar demarche, to be undertaken at a later date, was also proposed in relation to Rwanda. In addition, the participants welcomed my Special Envoy's proposal to partner with MONUSCO to organize a national workshop on the implementation of the national commitments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo under the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework.

17. As indicated in my most recent report on MONUSCO (S/2015/172), FARDC and MONUSCO have continued their military operations against armed groups, notably the Allied Democratic Forces. That group continues to target innocent civilians in and around Beni, North Kivu. In other developments, on 30 December the Burundian army reportedly clashed with an unidentified armed group that had reportedly crossed from the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo into Cibitoke Province. The spokesperson for the Burundian army reported that 95 armed elements had been killed and 9 taken into custody. The Burundian authorities indicated that an investigation would be conducted. In another development, this time in Ruhuha, near the border between Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, MONUSCO and FARDC launched a joint operation (Kamilisha Usalama II) against a stronghold of the Forces nationales de libération, a Burundian rebel group, on 5 January. During the operation, 60 heavily armed combatants were forced to abandon the position.

B. Humanitarian situation

18. The humanitarian situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region remained a cause for concern during the reporting period. The eastern provinces (North Kivu, South Kivu, Maniema and Orientale) continued to grapple with a complex emergency in which people, especially children, remained vulnerable to epidemics, attacks by armed groups, human rights abuses and malnutrition. The continuing conflict in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, combined with other conflicts in the region, including in the Central African Republic, continued to cause significant population displacement throughout the region. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo alone, some 2.7 million people are internally displaced. The country continues to host some 122,000 refugees from neighbouring countries. The humanitarian action plan for the Democratic Republic of the Congo for 2015 requires $692 million to meet the prioritized needs of 5.2 million people affected by conflict, malnutrition, epidemics and natural disasters.

19. Humanitarian agencies in the Democratic Republic of the Congo have strengthened internal preparedness ahead of planned military operations against FDLR, including by reinforcing coordination with country offices in neighbouring Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda to tackle their cross-border impact. The humanitarian country team in the Democratic Republic of the Congo recently updated its humanitarian contingency plan. Furthermore, the team has continued to advocate the protection of civilians before, during and after military operations, in addition to access for the delivery of essential lifesaving humanitarian assistance to those affected by armed conflict.

20. Recognizing the multifaceted and regional nature of issues relating to refugees and internally displaced persons in the Great Lakes region, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) appointed a regional coordinator for the Great Lakes refugee situation on 15 October. He will help to fine-tune the UNHCR strategy and develop durable solutions for Congolese and Rwandan refugees in the region, in close collaboration with key partners.

21. Continuing insecurity in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, coupled with unresolved issues relating to land and natural resources, has continued to prevent some 443,250 Congolese refugees living in neighbouring countries from returning home. In September, UNHCR issued a position paper relating to Congolese refugees, in which it noted that persons fleeing the conflict in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo were likely to be in need of international refugee protection. It urged States not to forcibly return persons from the Kivus, Katanga and parts of Orientale Province until the security and human rights situation in those areas had improved considerably.

22. UNHCR has also developed a comprehensive strategy to address the situation of Rwandan refugees. It examined several alternatives, including creating enabling conditions for voluntary repatriation, pursuing opportunities for local integration or alternative legal status in countries of asylum and developing a schedule for the cessation of refugee status. The number and profile of Rwandan refugees in the Democratic Republic of the Congo have been difficult to estimate since 1996, when significant numbers of refugees fled attacks on the camps in which they had found shelter. Nonetheless, a pre-registration process conducted by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has identified 245,298 Rwandan refugees

currently living in the country. The Congolese National Commission for Refugees and UNHCR now plan to launch a biometric registration exercise to verify the number of refugees in order to have a reliable database for tracking individual protection cases. The biometric registration will help in identifying the characteristics of the refugee population and providing better needs-based protection and assistance. It will cost an estimated $2,410,665 and take some six months to complete. An amount of $1,410,665 is needed to launch the exercise, with the United States Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration having pledged $1 million.

23. As indicated in my previous report, UNHCR and the World Bank are finalizing a study on forced displacement to provide Governments and development partners with information on the development needs of the displaced and to formulate recommendations on the design of displacement-sensitive policy and operational activities in border communities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia. In September, the Office of my Special Envoy partnered with the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, UNHCR, ICGLR, the European Union-United Nations Partnership on Land, Natural Resources and Conflict Prevention, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the World Bank to convene a group of experts in preparation for a ministerial conference on land and property rights for returning refugees and internally displaced persons in the Great Lakes region.

C. Human rights, child protection and sexual and gender-based violence

24. Various actors, including the Allied Democratic Forces and FDLR, and State security and defence forces, continued to commit human rights violations during the reporting period. Armed groups also continued to recruit children for combat. Another issue of concern was the disproportionate reaction of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to demonstrations relating to amendments to the electoral law in January 2015. As noted in my most recent report on MONUSCO (S/2015/172), at least 20 people were killed and 64 others injured by the police and the Republican Guard. Some 480 demonstrators, including opposition figures, were arrested and detained, some of them incommunicado. Furthermore, the Government blocked access to the Internet, social media and text-messaging services from 20 January to 8 February to discourage the organization of further demonstrations. Some radio and television stations were also suspended during that period.

25. On 1 December, the Appeals Chamber of the International Criminal Court upheld a term of imprisonment of 14 years for the former Congolese militia leader, Thomas Lubanga, who had been convicted of conscripting child soldiers and using them in combat. On 6 January, a top commander of the Lord's Resistance Army, Dominic Ongwen, surrendered to United States forces in the Central African Republic. He was transferred to the Court on 21 January. The surrender of Ongwen, who was indicted for murdering civilians, enslaving children and stealing property, provides a strong case for cooperation between national, regional and international mechanisms to neutralize armed groups and prosecute perpetrators of atrocities.

D. Regional economic integration

26. From 3 to 5 November, the eighth ICGLR-Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development-United Nations Group of Experts Forum on Responsible Mineral Supply Chains was held in Kinshasa to discuss the progress made in ensuring due diligence with regard to the supply chains for minerals in the Great Lakes region. My Special Envoy addressed the participants. While in Kinshasa, he also attended the third meeting of ICGLR ministers in charge of mining, at which the participants assessed progress concerning the Protocol against the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources, in particular with regard to conflict minerals. At both meetings, the participants acknowledged the significant progress made by the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda in relation to certification mechanisms for minerals and noted that actions by Burundi, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania were encouraging. They called upon States to address continuing challenges in regulating the informal sector operated by artisanal miners, the lengthy and costly process of certification and the low international confidence in minerals originating from the region, which also constrained legal mineral exports.

27. Preparations for the Great Lakes private sector investment conference continued throughout the reporting period. In that context, the Government of Angola, the ICGLR secretariat and the Office of my Special Envoy organized a regional consultation on the investment opportunities brief for the region in Luanda on 17 and 18 December. States members of ICGLR actively participated therein and demonstrated a strong sense of ownership of the process. The participants reviewed the brief, submitted proposals to improve it and provided input to the preparations for the conference. They also supported my Special Envoy's proposal to place regional cooperation and the promotion of public and private investment at the forefront of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. They endorsed the brief and the proposed plan of action for convening the conference.

28. Efforts aimed at harmonizing regional economic integration in the Great Lakes region have reached an advanced stage. The twenty-first meeting of the Sectoral Council of Ministers Responsible for East African Community Affairs and Planning was held in Kigali from 27 to 31 October to consider the status of implementation of previous decisions for enhancing regional integration and to review progress on the Tripartite Free Trade Area Agreement between the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, the East African Community and SADC. The Council of Ministers of the East African Community held its thirtieth meeting from 20 to 28 November, during which it considered the preparations for the sixteenth Ordinary Summit of the East African Community Heads of State, held on 20 February in Nairobi, which had as its theme "Deepening and accelerating integration: towards political federation".

III. Implementation of the commitments under the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework

A. Commitments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo

29. During the period under review, limited progress was achieved in the implementation of the national commitments of the Democratic Republic of the

Congo. The appointment of the long-awaited Government of national cohesion on 7 December represents a positive step towards implementing the sixth national commitment relating to national reconciliation. The Government is, however, yet to accelerate the implementation of the reforms identified in the Framework and by the National Oversight Mechanism.

30. In October, the Coordinator of the National Oversight Mechanism transmitted to Parliament the benchmarks derived from the national commitments, with a view to integrating them into the 2015 budget. Active advocacy by the Coordinator contributed to the inclusion of the commitments in the 2015 budget law. The Mechanism also worked with the Ministry of Planning to make the national benchmarks operational and finalize the identification of activities to be included in the Government's priority action plan.

31. To implement the commitment to prevent armed groups from destabilizing neighbouring countries, an amount of $10 million was allocated in the 2015 budget to fund the country's third national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration plan. During his visit to Kinshasa from 10 to 13 February, my Special Envoy encouraged the Congolese authorities and international partners to mobilize the resources required to facilitate the implementation of the plan. With regard to security sector reform, the Government made limited progress during the reporting period. Importantly, it began to restructure the FARDC command, beginning on 19 September, and instituted an additional command level comprising three defence zones.

32. My most recent report on MONUSCO (S/2015/172) contains further information on the status of implementation of the national commitments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

B. Commitments of other countries in the region

33. In addition to relative progress in regional economic integration and judicial accountability, as noted in section II, the countries of the region concentrated their efforts on combating illegal armed groups active in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo during the reporting period.

34. The Government of Angola, as Chair of ICGLR, continued its efforts to bring together States members of ICGLR and SADC to discuss the FDLR issue. As indicated herein, the ministers for foreign affairs and of defence of ICGLR and SADC met in Luanda on 19 and 20 October and reiterated the ultimatum given to FDLR to disarm and surrender by 2 January. They also tasked the secretariats of ICGLR and SADC with supporting and monitoring efforts towards the full disarmament of FDLR. My Special Envoy, who attended the meeting, stressed that the leaders of the region should continue to create the conditions for a full, voluntary disarmament of FDLR, while simultaneously pursuing a credible process to exert military pressure on the armed group when the ultimatum expired. He also cautioned the ministers that failure to neutralize FDLR swiftly had the potential to exacerbate tensions within the region.

35. A number of high-level diplomatic activities have been conducted in the region to foster cooperation and build consensual approach to the neutralization of all armed groups in the region, with a focus on FDLR and the Allied Democratic

Forces. On 19 September, the President of the Congo, Denis Sassou Nguesso, visited his counterpart in Kinshasa. They agreed to enhance bilateral cooperation on issues of common interest, as indicated in my report on MONUSCO dated 30 December (S/2014/957).

36. On 17 December, the President of Rwanda, Paul Kagame, travelled to Luanda and met the President of Angola, José Eduardo dos Santos, to discuss FDLR and other matters relating to cooperation between the countries. On 21 and 22 December, the President of South Africa, Jacob Zuma, led a high-level delegation to Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania to discuss FDLR. He also travelled to Angola on 14 January to engage with his Angolan counterpart on FDLR and other issues of interest to the Tripartite Mechanism on Dialogue and Cooperation, which brings together Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Africa. The President of Angola paid a four-hour visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo on 19 January and met the President, with whom he discussed FDLR and other bilateral matters. On 28 January, officials from the Rwandan and Ugandan armed forces signed a memorandum of understanding on the sharing of intelligence on the activities of rebel groups in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.

37. Meanwhile, the fifth ordinary session of the Plenary Assembly of the Forum of Parliaments of Member States of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region was held in Nairobi from 20 to 22 January, organized by the ICGLR secretariat. It was attended by more than 70 parliamentarians from States members of ICGLR and representatives of the Office of my Special Envoy. It afforded an opportunity to review recent political and security developments and discuss future prospects for peace and stability in the region. The participants also discussed the role of the region's parliaments in implementing the declaration on the fight against youth unemployment through infrastructure development and investment promotion, which had been adopted at the special summit of Heads of State and Government of ICGLR held in Nairobi in July. In addition, the role of the region's parliaments in combating the illegal exploitation of natural resources was highlighted. I am pleased that the Forum's action plan for 2015-2016 reflects the readiness of the region's parliamentarians to actively participate in the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework and the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region.

C. International commitments

38. The Office of my Special Envoy has been collaborating with the African Union, the European Union, the World Bank Group and the Government of Belgium to organize a second conference of development partners for the Great Lakes region. The conference, to be held in 2015, will bring together government officials and representatives of regional institutions and development partners to review the progress made since the first conference, held in Addis Ababa in July 2013. The participants will also discuss additional medium-term priorities and the formulation of a development action plan.

39. Since my joint visit to the Great Lakes region with the President of the World Bank Group, Jim Yong Kim, in May 2013, the Group has made progress in delivering on its commitments to the region. Since September, the Group has dispatched missions to advance designs for a number of projects. Furthermore, the

Group is on track to deliver on all its commitments within the 24-month period that the President announced during our joint visit. At the time of writing, the Board had already approved $538 million for regional programmes relating to energy development, sexual and gender-based violence, women's health, capacity-building for ICGLR and improvement of information and communications technology connectivity in the region.

40. The Office of my Special Envoy has also been collaborating with the World Bank Group to establish a facility intended to help to address the root causes of conflict in the Great Lakes region and ensure that Group programmes there are implemented in a conflict-sensitive manner. It is supporting the formulation of regional indicators of peace and stability for Group programmes falling under the fourth pillar of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework and helping to identify ways in which cross-border trade can increase the resilience of border communities. Moreover, it has partnered with the United Nations Human Settlements Programme and the Office of my Special Envoy to organize two events on land and property rights for refugees: an expert meeting was held on 1 October and a ministerial conference is planned from 21 to 24 April in Nairobi.

41. On 3 and 4 November, the Office of my Special Envoy and the United Nations Development Programme helped to organize a regional technical meeting in Addis Ababa, with the aim of creating a regional "One United Nations" programme to support the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. The United Nations country teams involved have identified the following areas of intervention that are aligned with the Framework: mobility; gender and sexual and gender-based violence; youth and children; cross-country trade and food security; and sustainable energy. At the time of writing, a follow-up meeting was to be held on 5 and 6 March.

D. Oversight mechanisms of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework

42. The Regional Oversight Mechanism met twice during the reporting period. Its fourth meeting was held on 22 September, on the margins of the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly, while its fifth was held on 31 January, on the margins of the twenty-fourth ordinary session of the Assembly of the African Union, in Addis Ababa. Importantly, at the fourth meeting, the participants endorsed the findings and recommendations contained in the first progress report on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, which was jointly prepared by the Office of my Special Envoy and the Office of the Special Representative of the African Union for the Great Lakes Region. At the fifth meeting, the participants endorsed the investment opportunities brief for the region, which was prepared by the Office of my Special Envoy with support from the United Nations Development Programme, the African Development Bank, the World Bank Group and the International Finance Corporation. It is designed to provide potential investors with information on priority investment areas and projects identified through a consultative process involving all the signatory countries.

43. The Technical Support Committee of the Regional Oversight Mechanism contributed to the preparation of the regional plan of action and the progress report on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. It met

periodically during the reporting period to assess the situation, tackle any technical issues relating to the implementation of the Framework and refer issues to the Mechanism, as necessary. During their ninth meeting, held in Nairobi on 8 and 9 January, the Committee members agreed on a set of recommendations for consideration by the Mechanism at its fifth meeting. It should be noted that Rwanda did not participate in that meeting of the Committee or in the most recent meeting of the Mechanism, most likely owing to its concerns regarding the neutralization of FDLR.

IV. Activities of my Special Envoy

44. Since assuming office in September, my Special Envoy has focused on the major challenges hindering the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework by engaging in intensive shuttle diplomacy with all his key interlocutors. Over the past six months, one of his main objectives has been to help to forge a consensus on the urgent need to neutralize FDLR.

45. During his extensive and frequent visits to the region, my Special Envoy encouraged relevant leaders to take on the FDLR issue decisively and coherently. In that context, he sought to reach a common position with the leadership of the African Union Commission on the issue. Furthermore, he met several Heads of State and Government and interacted with senior officials from Angola, Burundi, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, South Africa, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe. Throughout those consultations, he advocated a two-pronged approach to neutralize FDLR: on the one hand, coordinated efforts to facilitate the group's voluntary surrender and, on the other, preparations for the application of credible military pressure on the armed group, should it fail to disarm and surrender by the deadline.

46. Together with the African Union Commission, my Special Envoy convened a first meeting of the witnesses to the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. It was held in Addis Ababa on 1 December to develop a common strategy to deal with FDLR. The participants, including ministers from Angola, South Africa and Zimbabwe, urged the Democratic Republic of the Congo and MONUSCO to take the necessary action against FDLR if the group failed to comply with the provisions of Security Council resolutions 2098 (2013) and 2147 (2014) and the decisions of the leaders of ICGLR and SADC.

47. As the deadline of 2 January loomed, my Special Envoy met the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo on 20 December and stressed the need to take military action against FDLR if it failed to disarm and surrender by the deadline. He concurred with the need for military action after the deadline and gave assurances that operations would begin at a date to be determined by the military command on the ground. He added that steps should be taken to anticipate the humanitarian consequences of those operations.

48. After the deadline expired, my Special Envoy reached out to the Governments of Uganda and South Africa on 6 and 7 and 14 and 15 January, respectively. He joined officials from the Government of South Africa in issuing a press statement calling for military action against FDLR. On 22 January, he met the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the United Republic of Tanzania, Bernard Kamillius Membe, in Dar es Salaam and encouraged the full participation

of the country, as the largest contributor of troops to the Force Intervention Brigade, in the military operations against FDLR. While reiterating his Government's concern about the likelihood of collateral damage to civilians, the Minister expressed commitment to neutralizing all armed groups in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, including FDLR, through its contingent within the Brigade. My Special Envoy reassured him that due consideration had been given to protecting civilians in the preparations for military action against FDLR.

49. On 26 January, my Special Envoy travelled to Harare, where he met the President of Zimbabwe, Robert G. Mugabe, in his capacity as Chair of SADC and informed him that MONUSCO and the Force Intervention Brigade were ready to support FARDC operations against FDLR. The President praised the contributions of Malawi, South Africa and the United Republic of Tanzania to the Brigade as evidence of SADC commitment to helping to neutralize all armed groups in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.

50. My Special Envoy has also been encouraging efforts to improve relations between the countries of the region. He has been encouraging the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to convene a summit of the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries to boost regional development and cooperation and provide a forum for confidence-building between the leaders of Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda. The summit is tentatively scheduled for the first half of 2015. He has also reached out to the Executive Secretary of the Economic Community in that regard.

51. During the period under review, my Special Envoy also engaged with regional and international actors, including from civil society, to identify avenues for cooperation and explore opportunities to tackle the root causes of instability in the region. Those avenues and opportunities include implementing durable solutions for refugees and internally displaced persons, combating impunity, encouraging judicial cooperation and promoting socioeconomic development and the responsible exploitation of natural resources.

52. As part of his efforts in support of the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, my Special Envoy has identified the issue of natural resources as central to his work. In that regard, he has held consultations on the improvement of natural resource management with representatives of Governments, civil society and non-governmental organizations working on mining issues. In the same vein, he has been mobilizing support from the signatories to the Framework and from partners to create the conditions for holding the Great Lakes private sector investment conference.

53. In line with Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), my Special Envoy has continued to promote the involvement of civil society organizations and women's groups in efforts to bring peace and stability to the region. In that context, he has engaged with civil society organizations from the region to hear their views on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework and rally support for his mandate. His Office is collaborating with civil society focal points in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Uganda to establish a regional coalition of civil society actors.

54. Through the Women's Platform for the Framework, my Special Envoy has been promoting the political leadership and empowerment of women, notably by

helping to fund livelihoods projects in conflict-affected communities at the grass-roots level. A first round of grants totalling $193,874 was disbursed to women's groups from Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Uganda in November. In October, to mark the fourteenth anniversary of the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), the Office of my Special Envoy partnered with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, MONUSCO, other United Nations agencies, Governments and women's organizations to organize events in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda. During the events, he called for the increased involvement of women's organizations in peace initiatives in the region.

55. My Special Envoy also chaired the first face-to-face meeting of the Advisory Board of the Women's Platform on 29 January, on the margins of the twenty-fourth ordinary session of the Assembly of the African Union. He underscored the need to strengthen partnership with regional initiatives and institutions, notably the ICGLR Regional Women's Forum, the Office of the Special Envoy of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on Women, Peace and Security, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and the ministers of the region responsible for gender matters. He also encouraged the expansion of the Board to include other partners, such as the World Bank Group, and recommended improving the resource base of the Platform to enhance its impact at the grass-roots level.

56. Throughout the reporting period, my Special Envoy encouraged the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to swiftly implement its commitments under the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, including by making provision for those commitments in its national budget.

V. Observations and recommendations

57. Two years after it was signed, the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework is at a critical juncture. A year ago, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its neighbours had a unique opportunity to stabilize the region and improve the lives and livelihoods of ordinary people by implementing the commitments made in the Framework. Today, I am concerned that the region stands at a crossroads between peace and cyclical instability. The slow implementation of the Nairobi Declarations, the lack of meaningful progress in disarming FDLR and the persistent mistrust between signatories have combined to place the Framework under strain and hinder its implementation. I urge the signatories to and the guarantors of the Framework to tackle those issues as a matter of priority, with the assistance of the international community.

58. I welcome the regional and international consensus on the need to neutralize all armed groups operating in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. Effective military operations against FDLR should begin without delay, in line with the announcement made by the Chief of the General Staff of FARDC on 29 January. I urge the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to closely collaborate with MONUSCO and its Force Intervention Brigade in planning and conducting the operations with due consideration for the protection of civilians. I call upon the international community to continue to support humanitarian actors on the ground.

59. As part of neutralizing armed groups, efforts to ensure an effective programme of disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and/or repatriation of former combatants should be redoubled. The door should remain open to ex-combatants and their dependants who wish to enrol in existing programmes. I urge donors to continue to support the programmes and request the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to ensure that awareness-raising, repatriation and reinsertion activities proceed without delay. Ending the proliferation of armed groups also requires a comprehensive strategy that should include severing their economic lifelines, creating economic opportunities for young people and bringing perpetrators of atrocities to justice.

60. It is crucial to institute sustained dialogue and build trust between the signatories to the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. I call upon the leaders of the region to work together to define mutually acceptable solutions to neutralize the armed groups operating in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. In the same vein, I encourage the countries concerned to revive joint mechanisms and to convene a summit of the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries as soon as possible. I stand ready, through my Special Envoy, to help to build confidence and trust between the leaders of the region.

61. I urge all the signatories to the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework to renew their commitment to the Framework. I am deeply worried by the low turnout by the Heads of State and Government of the signatory countries at the most recent meeting of the Regional Oversight Mechanism, as well as by the absence of some signatories at the most recent meeting of the Technical Support Committee. The Framework can be an effective tool only as long as its signatories remain committed to it and collectively oversee its implementation. Its governance structures should be strengthened, given that they do not currently appear to provide the intended forums for substantive discussions on the key challenges facing Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region. I therefore recommend that the roles and formats of the Mechanism and the Committee be reviewed and strengthened, so that they effectively steer and monitor the implementation of the Framework. The Office of my Special Envoy is developing proposals to strengthen the governance structures, in close consultation with the African Union and the other witnesses. They will be submitted to the signatories in due course.

62. I welcome the preparations for the Great Lakes private sector investment conference and commend the participating Member States for their commitment. I urge public and private institutions to participate in the Conference, which will hopefully attract significant new investment to the region.

63. The exploitation of natural resources contributes greatly to instability in the region. Recent meetings have highlighted progress in enhancing transparency and strengthening legal exploitation. My Special Envoy has also consistently underlined the need to transform the exploitation of minerals from drivers of conflict into agents of inclusive peace, development and transformation. I call upon all stakeholders to step up their efforts to formalize the informal sector operated by artisanal miners, streamline the lengthy and costly process of mineral certification and rebuild confidence in the region's lawful mineral export mechanisms.

64. I commend current efforts to prosecute international crimes and violations of human rights at the national, regional and international levels during the reporting period. I am, however, concerned that individuals associated with violence in the

Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region, some of whom are under United Nations or international sanctions, or under international arrest warrants, remain at large. They include prominent members of FDLR, ex-M23 and FARDC. I remind the Governments of the region of their commitment to facilitate the administration of justice through regional judicial cooperation. I also urge them to work together to bring the perpetrators of serious crimes before the appropriate courts of law, whether through prosecution, extradition, surrender or transfer. Greater accountability and better administration of justice will go a long way in rebuilding confidence in the region's governance and judicial institutions, breaking recurrent cycles of violence and promoting durable peace.

65. I am pleased to note that the Women's Platform plays a significant catalytic role in supporting the political and economic empowerment of women in the region. It has the potential to contribute to addressing the root causes of instability, tackling the economic, social and political exclusion of women, addressing deeply entrenched sexual and gender-based violence and empowering women to become agents of transformation. I applaud the unique role that women's organizations play in promoting peace and reconciling communities. I call upon donors to support those organizations strongly and to help to expand the resource base of the Platform.

66. The risk and far-reaching consequences of violence during upcoming elections in several countries of the region should not be underestimated. We must make every effort to prevent election-related violence over the coming months and years. I urge all the Governments to provide ample space for free and open political participation. In particular, I urge all Governments, opposition parties, civil society organizations and international partners to contribute to credible, timely, transparent and peaceful elections throughout the region.

67. Lastly, I thank my Special Envoy, my Special Representative for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Head of MONUSCO and their teams, as well as the team of international envoys and representatives, for their tireless efforts to promote the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. I call upon the Security Council and the international community to continue to support the people of the Great Lakes region in their efforts to achieve the objectives of the "framework of hope".

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Report of the Peacebuilding Commission

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Seventieth year

Report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its eighth session

I. Introduction

1. The present report has been prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/180 and Security Council resolution 1645 (2005), in which the Peacebuilding Commission was requested to submit an annual report to the Assembly for an annual debate and review. The report will also be submitted to the Council, pursuant to its resolution 1646 (2005), for an annual debate. The report covers the eighth session of the Commission, held from 1 January to 31 December 2014.

2. On 29 October 2010, the General Assembly and the Security Council adopted identical resolutions 65/7 and 1947 (2010), respectively, through which the two organs, inter alia, requested the Commission to reflect, in its annual reports, the progress made in taking forward the relevant recommendations contained in the 2010 report of the co-facilitators on the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture (A/64/868-S/2010/393, annex). Beginning with the report on its sixth session, the implementation of relevant recommendations from the 2010 review has been mainstreamed into the reporting on the Commission's policy and country-specific activities. The structure of the two previous reports reflected this development in content and in format, placing added emphasis on performance of the main functions in the specific country settings, the role of the membership, the links with parent organs and the themes which the Commission explored.

3. As mandated by the General Assembly and the Security Council in their identical resolutions, both organs will launch a further comprehensive review of the peacebuilding architecture in 2015. The present report reflects the findings of the Commission's advance preparation for this review, which drew upon lessons learned from the implementation of recommendations from the 2010 review. The findings further reflect the ambitions and expectations of Member States emanating from the 2015 review.

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4. In the report on its seventh session (A/68/729-S/2014/67), the Commission decided to convene an annual session to commemorate "Peacebuilding Day"[1] and to enable closer interaction and engagement among the relevant stakeholders in New York and from the capitals of Member States on key challenges to international peacebuilding. The present report provides an overview of the outcome of and the envisaged follow-up to the first annual session, held on 23 June 2014.

II. Work of the Commission

5. Through its country-specific configurations and its broader policy advisory role, the Commission continued to carry out its three core functions of advocacy, accompaniment and sustaining attention; resource mobilization and partnerships; and forging coherence. The Commission further strengthened linkages at the country level with the programmatic activity of the Peacebuilding Fund. New avenues included the convening of the annual session, which addressed international support and strategies to promote domestic resource mobilization in countries emerging from conflict.

A. Overview of issues from the 2014 agenda going forward

6. In pursuing its agenda going forward for 2014 (ibid., paras. 39-42), the Commission has identified three areas of focus, namely: (a) preparation for and convening of its first ever annual session; (b) advance preparation for the 2015 review; and (c) mainstreaming regional perspectives into the work of the Commission. In parallel, the Commission has advanced its country-specific engagement through a continued focus on its three core functions.

7. The tragic outbreak of Ebola in three countries on the agenda, namely Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, forced the Commission to shift the focus of its engagement towards supporting efforts made by those countries and by the United Nations, the international community and other relevant actors to fight the disease. The Commission met regularly to focus international attention on the need to ensure that the outbreak does not create a long-term threat to the progress achieved in the three countries towards sustainable peace and inclusive development.

B. Advocacy, accompaniment and sustaining attention

8. Recognizing the high risk of relapse in situations where national institutions are weak or insufficiently developed, the Commission has sought to give particular emphasis in all of its deliberations to institution-building and social cohesion. As an intergovernmental body, the Commission is positioned to bring to bear the collective weight of its members to focus attention on outstanding challenges in a country's process towards peace consolidation. This role is particularly important during the transition and drawdown of United Nations missions.

[1] See declaration by the Commission entitled "Peacebuilding: the way towards sustainable peace and security" (PBC/6/OC/6, para. 14).

9. In Burundi, the Commission participated actively in the steering group, led by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, which oversaw the planning for the transfer of responsibilities from the United Nations Office in Burundi (BNUB) to the Government of Burundi and the United Nations country team. Through its participation, the Commission sought to ensure that the drawdown of BNUB does not have a negative impact on the country's progress towards the achievement of sustainable peace and does not result in gaps in the international community's attention and commitment to peace consolidation in Burundi. The opportunities and concerns presented by this transition were conveyed by the Commission in briefings to the Security Council. As a result of lack of trust between the Government of Burundi and some political parties, as well as the rising number of security incidents involving youth associated with political parties, the Commission became a platform for members of the international community to express concerns over the risk of political polarization and politically motivated violence. At the same time, the Commission sought to sustain the attention of Council members on the unfolding dynamics in Burundi, working closely with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to provide the Council with regular updates, material and advice in order to best manage the difficult period, which was characterized by mistrust and security incidents.

10. During the visit of the chair of the Burundi configuration to the country in late May, the Commission agreed with the Government to organize a round-table meeting with its main international partners in order to help reaffirm the mutual commitments agreed at the 2012 Geneva Partners Conference and better prepare for challenges following the drawdown of BNUB. Going forward, the Commission will draw upon the outcome of the round table, held on 11 and 12 December 2014 in Bujumbura, in order to focus its engagement with Burundi on the processes and measures that are critical for the successful and democratic conduct of elections in 2015, the continued reinforcement of social cohesion and the acceleration of the Government's development agenda.

11. Following the withdrawal in March of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL), the Commission advocated for the international community to remain committed to supporting the ongoing efforts of Sierra Leone to ensure sustainable peace. In the light of the spread of Ebola to Sierra Leone in May, the Commission was forced to recalibrate its engagement. Rather than scaling down its activities, in accordance with the Security Council's recommendation, the Commission has focused on the potential impact of the epidemic on institutional and political stability.

12. In Guinea, the Commission turned its focus during the reporting period to identifying opportunities to accompany and support the capacity of the new parliament, as a critical component of the country's efforts to consolidate peace and democracy. A joint mission to Conakry, undertaken on behalf of the Commission by the Peacebuilding Support Office, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and two non-United Nations partners, the National Democratic Institute and the Association of European Parliamentarians with Africa, sought to identify political and programmatic mechanisms for supporting the new parliament. The Minister for Human Rights and Civil Liberties of Guinea, who is also the political focal point of the country-specific configuration, travelled to New York in June to address the Commission as the keynote speaker at its annual session. He also addressed the country configuration at an informal meeting, at which he presented

Guinea's priorities for peacebuilding and human rights and exchanged views with its members.

13. In Liberia, the Commission's performance of its advocacy, accompaniment and sustaining attention function was distinct from those activities in Burundi and Sierra Leone. Financial constraints and an insufficient national revenue base had continued to stall progress in the area of security sector reform and the rule of law. There was only limited progress towards the implementation of the Government of Liberia's Reconciliation road map. In this context, the Commission advocated for greater commitment by the Government to and ownership of justice and security reform, particularly in view of the planned drawdown of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). It also encouraged the Government to ensure greater involvement of civil society, including women's groups, in the national reconciliation process. Moreover, and in close partnership with the Government, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and UNMIL, the Commission promoted a continuous dialogue on gender issues. It has also promoted an increased allocation for gender issues from the Peacebuilding Fund. As a result, Liberia is one of the countries where the allocation of the Fund for gender-related issues is higher than the target of 15 per cent set by the Secretary-General in his report on women's participation in peacebuilding (A/65/354-S/2010/466, para. 36). Recognizing the severe resource constraints facing the Government of Liberia and the centrality of natural resources for State finances, the Commission sought greater international support for the management of both natural resources and land disputes. The focus on those issues was prioritized, as they were seen as key sources of conflict in the country in the past. The Commission has repeatedly reiterated to relevant stakeholders the importance of managing natural resources and land issues in a way that would benefit all citizens. At the request of the Government and the Commission, a study was conducted by UNDP, the World Bank, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Liberia and the Liberian Land Commission on citizens' engagement in natural resources management, with support from the Peacebuilding Support Office. This is an area where the partnership among the Commission, the Peacebuilding Support Office and the World Bank promises to help generate new strategies and international support, which will be particularly important following the country's recovery from the Ebola outbreak and in advance of the drawdown of UNMIL.

14. In Guinea-Bissau, the Commission focused its attention on supporting the efforts of the United Nations, led by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, to create a supportive political environment for the conduct of presidential and legislative elections in April and May. In this respect, the Commission issued two press statements, on 14 and 19 May, respectively, welcoming the peaceful conduct of the two rounds of elections, which marked the end of the transition period that followed the unconstitutional change of Government in 2012. In addition to visits undertaken by the Chair in January and October, the Commission offered a platform for the Special Representative, the transitional government and key regional and international actors to exchange views and information on the progress of the electoral preparations. The subsequent installation of a democratically elected government has paved the way for the restoration of constitutional order, the resumption of international recognition and the re-engagement of development partners. The Commission is expected to accompany the national Government's

medium- to long-term plan to develop a national peacebuilding strategy and a framework of mutual commitments with its regional and international partners.

15. The tragic recurrence of conflict in the Central African Republic has created challenges in the country that are significantly different from those that were prevailing when the country was placed on the Commission's agenda. A special political mission was replaced by a multidimensional peacekeeping mission, with a corresponding increase in the presence of international actors on the ground. The Commission sought to sustain attention on the unfolding situation in the country among a diverse group of Member States by convening a series of discussions with religious leaders, experts on the region and representatives of civil society organizations. It also offered an informal platform for the exchange of information and updates by the United Nations lead departments, the World Bank, regional countries and key development partners. Following an appeal to the Commission by the President of the Transitional Government of the Central African Republic during a visit by the configuration chair in February, the Peacebuilding Fund and the World Bank joined efforts to pay the salaries of civil servants from May through August, which contributed to the re-establishment of core public services in the country. At the same time, the continuing security, fiscal and institutional challenges faced by the transitional authorities posed new challenges to the ability of the Commission to accompany the transition process in the country. The ceasefire agreement signed in Brazzaville on 23 July 2014, however, should lead to agreement on a political framework for which the Commission can catalyse the support of the United Nations, and regional and international actors.

C. Resource mobilization and partnerships

16. The Commission has continued to approach its resource mobilization function in the broader context of its role in advocacy, accompaniment and sustaining attention. The Commission has observed that in many cases, progress in the peaceful management of political competition, as well as in the effectiveness of and transparency in financial management, encourages greater donor engagement and commitment. At the same time, the Commission has increased its attention to areas of State and intergovernmental policy, including domestic revenue generation and the curbing of illicit financial flows, which could provide complementary avenues for resource mobilization. The Commission believes that this approach would reinforce its commitment to the promotion of national ownership by placing greater emphasis on the country's capacity to generate and utilize domestic resources.

17. In Burundi, for example, the Commission has continued to draw upon the outcome of the 2012 Geneva Partners Conference and its partnership with the World Bank in order to sustain the mutual commitment of the Government and its development partners to initiate a dialogue on broader political and economic reforms and economic development needs. In order to reinvigorate earlier commitments and rebuild trust between the country and its partners, plans for a round table in Bujumbura were initiated in May during visits to Burundi and to the World Bank by the chair of the Burundi configuration.

18. In Guinea-Bissau, the Commission provided a forum for the new Government to present its plans and priorities, which will be taken forward to a donor conference that is planned for February 2015. The Commission has supported the plans put

forward by the newly elected Government to clarify existing commitments for the exploitation of mineral resources, ensuring that resources are used to maximize public utility. This review should enable the country to improve its capacity to generate domestic resources. A national strategic plan, aimed at developing a vision of comprehensive State-building, is being developed by the new Government and will be presented at the donor conference. The conference will provide an opportunity for the Government to engage its partners in support of its medium- to long-term peace consolidation and development strategy. In response to those dynamic and nationally led planning processes and the Government's strong commitment to enact reforms, the Commission is expected to support the donor conference, including through advocacy with international partners.

19. The Ebola crisis has limited the performance of the Commission of this function in the three most affected countries on its agenda. The urgency and predominance of the emergency medical and public health response fell outside the Commission's purview and competence. The Commission has sought to strengthen its cooperation with the World Bank and other operational actors around the response to the Ebola crisis in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, focusing on the consequences of the crisis on State fragility, social cohesion and political institutions. The Commission invited the World Bank and the United Nations Office for West Africa in November to provide a brief on the economic, social and political impact of the crisis. The briefing was an opportunity to highlight the need for the scaling-up of international efforts to mitigate the deterioration in economic growth, State finances and core State functioning in the three countries.

20. The Commission will continue to fulfil its resource mobilization functions through a combination of advocacy, accompaniment and sustaining attention in a broad range of issues. This approach recognizes the deep interdependence among governance, inclusive politics and resource mobilization. It also builds on the Commission's utility as a diplomatic platform, as opposed to a venue for fundraising. The Commission's work on advocacy and sustaining attention, on resource mobilization and on forging coherence will increasingly become mutually reinforcing and will be pursued strategically to help place the needs and priorities of the countries concerned at the centre of the international community's attention. To this end, and as demonstrated by the discussion that took place at the annual session, there is a need to build more extensive country-specific and thematic partnerships with United Nations and non-United Nations partners, in particular with the World Bank and the African Development Bank.

D. Forging coherence

21. In the report on its previous session, the Commission noted that it could strengthen the coherence of peacebuilding-related engagements in countries on its agenda by highlighting key gaps in international support for countries emerging from conflict and by drawing attention to bottlenecks in their political, institutional and economic development. It also pointed to the need for greater consistency and coherence of decisions made by its membership on the peacebuilding-related areas of bilateral assistance and for more consistent follow-up of commitments made in relevant multilateral forums.

22. In Burundi, the Commission intensified its efforts to engage key regional partners, in particular during the brief period of political tensions that occurred during the reporting period. The visit undertaken in May by the chair of the Burundi configuration to Rwanda and to the headquarters of the Economic Commission for Africa, along with frequent meetings of the Commission with Burundi's neighbours, regional States and key international partners, has contributed to greater coherence of support at a time of heightened tensions. In addition, the Commission supported the coherence of peacebuilding-related initiatives in Burundi at the country level. The Commission has worked in close partnership with the Peacebuilding Support Office to enhance international support and build consensus around the programmatic activities in the country backed by the Peacebuilding Fund. This synergy will be particularly crucial in addressing the remaining critical peacebuilding issues, especially in relation to the conduct and acceptance of the upcoming elections and following the drawdown of BNUB.

23. In Guinea-Bissau, regional support and international commitment to a successful transition was evident throughout the preparation for the presidential and legislative elections, which were held in April and May. The Commission contributed to the efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to ensure that neighbouring countries and other regional and subregional actors were kept informed and were invested in support of the transition process and the timely conduct of the elections. The Commission has continued to promote the coordination and alignment of support for the post-election priorities of Guinea-Bissau among States in the region, key subregional and international organizations and development partners.

24. With regard to the Central African Republic, the region will continue to play a supportive role in developing and encouraging a political solution to the crisis. The Commission can complement the efforts of the United Nations leadership in the field to ensure that the region and neighbouring States are working in close coordination in support of security and stability in the country. This approach would take into consideration the specific regional dynamics and the need to ensure that the security and political concerns and the interests of relevant regional actors are adequately addressed.

25. In Liberia, the Commission supported efforts by the Government, United Nations actors and bilateral partners to strengthen a coordinated approach to building capacity in the areas of justice and security, including the entire rule of law chain.

Coherence and the regional aspects of peacebuilding

26. During the reporting period, the Commission placed added emphasis on the importance of forging greater regional coherence as a key factor in helping countries to sustain peace and avoid relapse into conflict. Recent developments in countries on the Commission's agenda have highlighted the crucial role that neighbouring countries, the African Union and African subregional organizations can and should play as primary partners in sustaining political processes and in addressing sources of instability. The Commission, therefore, placed greater emphasis during the reporting period on actively engaging its African members, in particular those in the immediate neighbourhood of the countries on the agenda. The Commission also placed emphasis on sharpening the institutional linkages and collaboration with the

African Union and relevant subregional organizations with a view to more effectively addressing country-specific challenges and opportunities.

27. At the same time, the African members of the Commission have established a political caucus aimed at articulating a regional perspective on peacebuilding. The caucus could play a crucial role in catalysing a more proactive engagement of the African members and of the countries on the agenda in shaping and orienting the Commission's advice to the Security Council and in bringing greater alignment of regional and Member States' policies when addressing the needs and concerns of the countries on the agenda.

28. At its annual session on 23 June and at other meetings, the Commission noted the efforts of the African Union, with the support of the Economic Commission for Africa, to address the challenges posed by illicit financial flows from Africa. A regional approach to addressing this challenge would be required, including through technical assistance and experience-sharing among African countries. This is an area where the Commission's partnership with the African Union could contribute to gradual policy development at the global level through relevant intergovernmental forums.

29. In order to further advance the Commission's engagement and coordination with the African Union and African subregional organizations, the Chair led a delegation comprising the chairs of the Burundi and the Central African Republic configurations to Cairo and Addis Ababa from 24 to 26 November. In Cairo, the delegation participated in a workshop on the theme "Regional aspects of peacebuilding", hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Egypt and the Cairo Center for Conflict Resolution and Peacekeeping in Africa with the support of the Peacebuilding Support Office. In Addis Ababa, the delegation held a policy dialogue with the African Union Peace and Security Council, the African Union Commission and the Economic Commission for Africa.

30. The workshop in Cairo represented an opportunity for the Commission's delegation to engage in a dialogue with representatives of African Governments, including countries on the Commission's agenda and representatives of the African Union, the regional economic commissions and research institutes, as well as of the World Bank, the African Development Bank and of key partner countries. The workshop was convened with a view to generating preliminary inputs to the 2015 review on the theme of regional aspects of peacebuilding. In this regard, the workshop focused on the role of regional actors in support of credible political processes and in support of building viable national institutions in the African countries emerging from conflict. The discussions confirmed that the Commission should further enhance its engagement with and support for regional initiatives aimed at encouraging inclusive and sustained political dialogue in those countries. Particular emphasis was placed on the need for the Commission to play a greater role in forging coherence among the bilateral engagements that are led by African institutions, by the United Nations, by the international financial institutions and by the African Development Bank, thus reinforcing the linkages between security and development approaches to building and sustaining peace. To this end, participants noted the opportunity offered by the 2015 review to explore and recommend practical adjustments that would strengthen the contribution of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture to regional peace and development objectives.

31. The interaction with the African Union Peace and Security Council during the visit of the group of chairs to African Union headquarters in Addis Ababa sought to lay the foundation for a more systematic exchange of views and greater complementarity of efforts in support of peace consolidation between the Commission and the Council, with specific focus on Burundi, the Central African Republic and Guinea-Bissau. It was noted that there is a need to develop common and shared understanding among the Commission, the African Union country liaison offices and the United Nations presence in the three countries of the context-specific opportunities and challenges for peace consolidation. The dialogue also reflected a convergence of views on the need for factoring the regional dimension throughout the continuum of post-conflict engagement. In this regard, the dialogue underscored the complementarity between the roles and functions of the United Nations and those of regional actors in accompanying sustainable political and socioeconomic recovery processes in the African countries emerging from conflict. Members of the Council highlighted the need for greater focus on joint collaboration in preventive actions and on long-term institution-building. In this context, members of the Council underscored the need for developing a common African Union position vis-à-vis the areas that will be addressed during the 2015 review.

32. The exchange between the representatives of the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Development Bank focused on ways to strengthen communication and deepen collaboration in support of policy development that would help place greater programmatic emphasis on addressing areas of fragility and the risks of relapse. In this regard, the African Development Bank noted that there is increasing focus on institution-building and sustainability in the design of the Bank's engagement in post-conflict situations. The Commission noted the need for programmes that would support the capacity of Governments to generate domestic revenues and effectively negotiate contracts that would help maximize the benefit from the exploitation of natural resources. The Bank referred to the newly established African Natural Resources Centre, which is dedicated to providing country-specific support in close coordination with the African Union.

E. Policy development

33. The diverse and varied experience of the United Nations and the international community provides an opportunity for the Commission to explore means for further policy development, which would ensure timely and sustained support during the critical phases of a country's post-conflict development. The Commission's first annual session, the work of the organizational committee in preparation for the 2015 review and the review of the transition of United Nations missions led by the Commission's Working Group on Lessons Learned have highlighted the potential of the Commission in this area.

First annual session (23 June) on the theme "Sustainable support for peacebuilding: the domestic and international aspects"

34. On 23 June, the Peacebuilding Commission convened its first annual session, which represented a critical step in the continuing evolution of the work of the Commission and its orientation. In addition to its country-specific engagement, the unique and broad-based membership structure was considered an asset through which the Commission should be able to advance global policy relevant to countries

emerging from conflict. Through successive annual sessions, the Commission hopes to offer a standing platform for reflection on the role of international frameworks and policies and the commitment of Member States to help countries avoid relapse into conflict.

35. The first annual session was convened on the theme "Sustainable support for peacebuilding: domestic and international aspects". Through the use of a thematic focus on domestic revenue generation and the fight against illicit financial flows from countries emerging from conflict, the session explored effective and sustainable systems for resource mobilization as critical elements for peace consolidation. The selection of the theme marked the Commission's shift towards more practical means of performing its core function of resource mobilization beyond traditional fundraising. Two interactive substantive working sessions addressed (a) the mobilization of international and domestic resources and revenue generation; and (b) lessons learned on the development of national capacities and sustainability of resources in the context of transitions of United Nations missions. The working sessions brought together Member States, many of which were represented by officials based in the capitals, United Nations entities, international financial institutions, the African Development Bank and representatives of specialized civil society organizations.

36. The discussion sought to draw the attention of key actors to gaps in intergovernmental mechanisms to ensure timely, targeted and sustained support for countries emerging from conflict in the area of mobilization of domestic resources. At the same time, several participants noted the need for effective global policy frameworks to help curb and mitigate the impact of illicit financial flows out of those countries and to support capacity-building in the areas of taxation and domestic revenue generation. Sustained commitment in this area would enhance the ability of post-conflict countries to domestically generate a greater part of the financial resources needed to rebuild their economic infrastructure and deliver essential services, thereby strengthening the social contract between the State and its citizens.

37. The interactive discussion in the first working session enabled the Commission to identify four areas for further policy development in support of post-conflict countries: (a) capacity development to generate domestic revenues, including the capacity to negotiate natural resource contracts; (b) transparency and accountability of extractive industries and applicable tax regimes; (c) the fight against illicit financial flows by developing international frameworks that would help increase mutual accountability and international cooperation on tax regimes, and address tax avoidance and trade mispricing; and (d) addressing inappropriate banking privacy laws, which are critical components of some illicit financial flows.

38. As a follow-up to the annual session, the Commission is planning to pursue the four identified policy areas and to explore practical ways to advocate on behalf of post-conflict countries in deliberations taking place in relevant intergovernmental forums. Through its advocacy, the Commission will help identify the policies required to reinforce international and regional efforts to fight illicit financial flows. In this regard, and during the meetings held in November in Addis Ababa with the African Union, the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Development Bank, the Commission explored ways to collaborate in support of the recommendations of the High-level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows from Africa.

Advance preparation for the 2015 review

39. Between May and October, the Organizational Committee embarked on advance preparation for the 2015 review of the peacebuilding architecture. In their respective resolutions 65/7 and 1947 (2010), the General Assembly and the Security Council called for a comprehensive review to be conducted in 2015. The purpose of the advance preparation was to foster broader ownership of the review among key Member States through inclusive and extensive consultations on the objectives, scope, methodology and modalities for conducting the review. In parallel, the Secretary-General initiated a process, endorsed by his Policy Committee in February, to develop a collective contribution to the review from the United Nations system (see A/69/553-S/2014/763). This process has generated recommendations on the strategic orientation and utility of the Commission. Both preparatory processes were designed to address a key shortcoming of the 2010 review, namely the lack of both ownership of its outcome and of recommendations from both Member States and the United Nations system. A broad understanding on the ambitions of and the expectations from the review were further discussed at an informal retreat organized at the ambassadorial level by the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation with the participation of the Deputy Secretary-General and other senior United Nations officials. On 3 November, the Chair submitted the outcome of the Commission's advance preparation to the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Security Council for consideration.

40. The advance preparation reflects a convergence among Member States that the 2015 review should place the challenges facing the countries emerging from conflict at the centre of the United Nations response in post-conflict situations. A commitment to help States avoid relapse into violent conflict was the motivation for the creation in 2005 of the Peacebuilding Commission, the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Peacebuilding Fund. Member States agreed that the review needed to take this original motivation as its point of departure. The Commission proposed that the review analyse the progress made since 2005 and the continuing gaps in the response of the international community and the United Nations to post-conflict challenges. To achieve this, it was agreed that the review should be broad in scope in order for it to generate recommendations that could help adapt the three entities to current realities and the changing approaches of the United Nations system and the needs of countries emerging from conflict.

41. Member States have further agreed that the analysis underpinning the review should, therefore, be anchored in country-specific case studies, from which broader lessons on progress and causes of relapse into conflict can be drawn. It was also agreed that the case studies should be combined with a broader policy and institutional review aimed at taking stock of the evolution in the responses of regional and international institutions and the United Nations in post-conflict situations since 2005, the nature and impact of the contribution of the peacebuilding architecture to those responses, where it was involved, and the implications for the advisory role of the Commission with regard to its mandating bodies, the General Assembly and the Security Council, in support of broader peacebuilding objectives in the countries concerned. As a result, the Commission's preparatory process has produced suggested terms of reference for the review that would help guide the case studies and identify the specific structural and systemic gaps and shortcomings for which practical and actionable recommendations and adjustments were needed. The advance preparation also yielded an agreement on modalities for conducting the

review. Those modalities would observe the intergovernmental character of the review, while ensuring that the process is informed by recommendations submitted through an advisory group of experts for consideration and final decision by the Assembly and the Council.

42. The advance preparations confirmed that Member States remain committed to ensuring that the outcome of the review will contribute to helping countries emerging from conflict to avoid relapse into conflict. Recent cases of relapse in the Central African Republic and in South Sudan highlight the continuing gaps in global, United Nations and regional support for peace consolidation. A key ambition for the 2015 review, therefore, would be to generate ideas that help strengthen the performance and impact of the Commission to realize its full potential and improve its work as a tool of strategic utility to operational actors in the field and its advisory role with regard to the General Assembly and the Security Council. The review could highlight key gaps in current political, developmental and security support for countries emerging from conflict for the benefit of policymakers and operational actors. In going over current practice, the review could highlight the practical links and complementarity between the security, institutional and socioeconomic-related aspects of peace consolidation and broader political frameworks.

43. The support for a broad scope for the 2015 review points to the acknowledgement by Member States that the political and operational components of a broader United Nations and global peacebuilding architecture must work in synergy. The Commission agreed, therefore, that the analysis underpinning the 2015 review should also be undertaken in conjunction and synergy with the upcoming review of peace operations by the Secretary-General.

Strengthening the advisory function with regard to the Security Council

44. The Commission has continued to explore ways to strengthen the advisory function to and improve interaction with the Security Council. The Commission has pursued two tracks in its relations with the Council: (a) a thematic focus on the transitions of United Nations missions coordinated by the Working Group on Lessons Learned under the chairmanship of Japan; and (b) periodic stock-taking, at the expert level, coordinated by Rwanda. The stock-taking exercise has examined the scope of the Commission's advisory function with regard to the Council and the modality of their interaction when countries are on the agenda of both bodies. In addition, the third informal interactive dialogue among members of the Council and the Commission's group of chairs addressed "the recurring relapse into conflict" witnessed in recent years.

Thematic focus: "transition of United Nations missions"

45. The transition of United Nations missions represents a key area in which the Commission can make a valuable contribution by providing advice to the Security Council.[2] During the reporting period, the Commission's advisory role in this area was carried out with a view to supporting the drawdown of UNIPSIL, the initiation of the drawdown of BNUB and the ongoing drawdown of UNMIL. Following initial

[2] Paragraph 16 of General Assembly resolution 60/180 and Security Council resolution 1645 (2005).

discussions conducted by the Working Group on Lessons Learned in 2012, the Commission decided to focus on "the transition of United Nations missions and the role of the Peacebuilding Commission"[3] in 2014.

46. The drawdown and withdrawal of missions mandated by the Security Council in post-conflict settings reflects a country's transformation from conflict to sustainable peace and development. While a decrease in attention from the Council could be seen as a sign of positive developments in a post-conflict country, the development of sustainable national capacities and resources is a long-term process that requires clear commitment from national stakeholders, strong national leadership and sustained support from the international community. Through interactive discussions at its annual session and a series of consultations under the auspices of the Working Group on Lessons Learned, the Commission has identified two critical challenges resulting from the transition processes of United Nations missions: (a) sustaining support for funding and technical capacity gaps; and (b) sustaining support for inclusive political processes. The Commission's experience in accompanying the process of the drawdown and withdrawal of UNIPSIL has confirmed the importance of providing sustained international attention and engagement with those countries in transition, in close collaboration with the United Nations and other relevant actors. It has also shown that the Commission could play a useful role in sensitizing and engaging key partners in New York on the challenges the transition has created for the Government, the society and the work of the United Nations.

47. Discussions at the annual session, as well as in the Working Group on Lessons Learned, pointed to insufficient funding in terms of international financing in the immediate aftermath of conflict and the lower levels of funding following the drawdown of United Nations missions, despite the continuing need for investments in the building of critical State institutions. This "financial cliff" arising from the termination of activities by the mission and the departure of its personnel was identified as an additional drawback that the countries in transition needed to address. The Commission noted, therefore, that in order to create a conducive environment during and after the drawdown of mandated missions, there is a need for greater support for building critical State institutions. This will include support for the development of national capacity to generate domestic resources and to curb illicit financial flows and for the creation of a legal and economic infrastructure for private sector growth.

48. In parallel with the challenge of addressing funding and capacity gaps associated with the drawdown of United Nations missions, the Commission noted the need to address possible gaps in the scale and scope of support for dialogue around outstanding political issues. Critical processes, such as national reconciliation and transitional justice, require persistence and continuity. While the measures are put in place to increase the political capacity of country teams through improved coordination between the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and UNDP, more efforts are needed to increase the scale and delivery of those measures and to ensure that they are focused more on national priorities.

[3] See report of the Working Group on Lessons Learned.

49. The Commission discussed how, as part of its advisory function, it could play a more practical role in supporting a smoother and more seamless transition from a sizeable United Nations mission to a development-oriented presence of the United Nations. The Commission noted that its broad-based membership could help sustain political, financial and technical engagement on the part of the international community, including regional actors and the international financial institutions, following the drawdown of a United Nations mission and decreased attention from the Security Council. A more dynamic interaction and collaboration with the Council would contribute to a productive engagement of the Commission with countries in transition.

Thematic focus: "recurring relapse into conflict"

50. The third informal interactive dialogue between members of the Security Council and the Commission's group of chairs was convened on 15 July. The Presidency of the Council and the Chair of the Commission identified "recurring relapse into conflict" as a thematic focus for this year's dialogue. The dialogue focused on (a) the factors that help sustain peace and those that contribute to relapse; and (b) the critical systemic gaps that undermine the effectiveness of the United Nations and the international system's response to and engagement in post-conflict situations. It also explored the potential contribution of the 2015 review to identifying and addressing those systemic gaps.

51. The Commission noted that its efforts should include the provision of support to mandates and accompanying programmes aimed at rebuilding critical national institutions and to advancing national reconciliation processes. The Commission further underscored the importance of focusing attention on inclusive political processes that would reinforce national ownership, and that international engagement needs to support efforts aimed at rebuilding the fabric of society and the establishment of a new social contract. Several participants emphasized the need for greater support to institution-building and for overcoming the inadequate, fragmented and short-lived financial and technical assistance in this area. In addition, the Commission further emphasized that most conflicts are influenced by regional dynamics and have extensive cross-border linkages. It was, therefore, crucial to identify practical ways to engage regional actors in the design and implementation of international political and accompaniment strategies for countries emerging from conflict in order to mitigate destabilizing regional dynamics.

52. With regard to the systemic gaps that undermine the effectiveness of response and engagement, the dialogue noted the challenges associated with the practical manifestation of the security and development nexus. It was also stressed that efforts aimed at strengthening international coherence in post-conflict settings are hindered by fragmented and siloed responses of security and development actors and by the lack of sustained attention and mutual accountability. The Commission stressed that the sequencing and prioritization of engagement remains a major problem, as mandates and programmatic support do not necessarily target conflict drivers and risk factors and are at times inappropriate to the country-specific context in which they are employed.

Periodic stock-taking of the scope of the advisory role of the Commission and the modality of interaction

53. The reporting period witnessed the continuation of the periodic expert-level stock-taking that was initiated in 2013 by the Organizational Committee under the coordination of Rwanda. The stock-taking discussions brought together representatives of the Council's presidencies, "pen holders", members of both bodies, chairs of country configurations and the countries on the agenda. The discussions confirmed that the Commission's advice to the Council needs to remain flexible and pragmatic and should be guided by country-specific contexts.

54. At the same time, some participants in those discussions called for a strategic approach to the Commission's advisory function that would help clarify how the diverse membership structure and flexible outreach to regional and international partners can complement and help reinforce the political strategy of the Security Council and the United Nations in each specific context. A more dynamic and strategically oriented use of the Commission's convening role, for example, could potentially contribute to improving regional and international coherence of positions and engagement in post-conflict situations.

55. The stock-taking discussions have pointed to three main principles that should underpin the modality of interaction between the Council and the Commission, namely (a) flexibility and informality; (b) engaging ambassadors, as well as country experts, on the Council; and (c) active follow-up by the Commission on the outcome of the Council's deliberations. In this regard, it was noted that certain Council presidencies have played a crucial role in creating an informal space for the chairs of country configurations and the countries on the agenda to discuss expectations and objectives of the Commission's engagement ahead of the Council's consideration of the situations in question. The Commission has recognized that "pen holders" can play an equally helpful role. Where they were activated, informal interactions led to formal briefings to the Council and reporting on field visits undertaken by the chairs that were better targeted and more responsive to the Council's needs. Council members have noted in particular that the Commission's interaction was particularly relevant and helpful when the timing of the chairs' field visits and subsequent reporting was aligned with the calendar of the Council's consideration of the situations in the countries concerned. In this respect, Council members noted that a combination of written communications and informal interactions would be particularly helpful. At the same time, some chairs suggested that the informal interactive dialogue format for country-specific discussions needed to be explored prior to an action envisaged by the Council, including during mandate revisions.

F. Working methods

56. The recommendations of the first ever Commission-led Peacebuilding Assessment Mission to Sierra Leone, conducted in November 2013, charted the future of the Commission's engagement with the country. Those recommendations emerged from broad-based consultations conducted by the chair of the configuration with the Government, the United Nations and key partners on the scope and form of the Commission's engagement with Sierra Leone during and after the drawdown of UNIPSIL. Those consultations were conducted during a visit to Freetown in

February 2014 and in subsequent discussions with members of the configuration, the Security Council, senior officials of the Government and civil society. During the visit, the chair sought to secure formal agreement with national authorities and other relevant stakeholders on the future engagement of the Commission. The transformation of the United Nations presence and of the Security Council engagement in Sierra Leone led the Commission to adopt a lighter approach, which sought to respond to the country's needs and concerns. In moving towards a flexible mode of engagement, the peacebuilding priorities included in Sierra Leone's Agenda for Prosperity will continue to provide guidance for the Commission's engagement. The establishment of a smaller advisory group, which would be convened as needed, was proposed with open membership that would bring together stakeholders that were directly engaged and committed to sustaining support to Sierra Leone. In addition, a light stock-taking was envisaged for the first quarter of 2015 to establish the appropriate timing for Sierra Leone's exit from the Commission's agenda. In view of the Ebola outbreak, this process will have to be adjusted and adapted to the emerging needs and challenges of the country. This flexibility in approach will enable the Commission to remain responsive to the needs of the country, as defined by the Government.

57. The Ebola outbreak has created a need for greater flexibility and innovative working methods. The joint effort of the Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone configurations, the regular and active participation of United Nations offices and agencies as well as that of the World Bank are a demonstration of the Commission's potential convening power. In addition, the collaboration of the country-specific configurations with the Organizational Committee has demonstrated the benefit of greater alignment of and coherence among the Commission's multiple components. The Commission's formal request to the Secretary-General for an assessment of the impact of the epidemic on State institutions, social cohesion and political fragility, which was communicated by the Chair on 25 November on behalf of the three configurations, represented an instance of the various components of the Commission working in close collaboration. The Commission has released several statements on the potential impact of the epidemic on State institutions and political stability as a result of discussions held in August and September. These have served as inputs for subsequent actions by the General Assembly and the Security Council.

58. As stipulated in the suggested terms of reference for the 2015 review, the analysis underpinning the review should explore ways to improve the Commission's working methods and decision-making in order to allow for greater involvement of its members and to facilitate inputs from various peacebuilding actors. In this regard, the Commission took note of the communication of the Secretary-General on the collective input of the United Nations system to the review (A/69/553-S/2014/763), a section of which was dedicated to the need for more flexible and dynamic modes of engagement. The Commission recognizes that in addition to its own efforts to streamline and rationalize many aspects of its working methods, there is room for improvement within the overall objective of enabling the Commission to realize its full potential.

G. Emerging cross-cutting issues

Response to the outbreak of Ebola

59. The outbreak of Ebola has significantly affected three of the six countries on the Commission's agenda. The outbreak started in Guinea in early December 2013 and spread to neighbouring Liberia in March 2014 and Sierra Leone in May 2014. As a result, the Commission shifted its focus to raising awareness in New York of the possible impact of the crisis on peace, stability, social cohesion and economic well-being of those countries in the longer term. Through three meetings in August, September and November and in two statements, the Commission cautioned against isolation of the countries, which would serve to compound the economic hardship resulting from the crisis. The Commission further highlighted the importance of sustained international support in responding to the crisis. The Commission's response has also brought greater attention and realignment on the part of the Peacebuilding Fund. The Fund has demonstrated flexibility that would allow for the emergency reprogramming of active projects in areas such as security sector reform, reconciliation, strengthening communication, and community-level early warning, conflict prevention and management systems.

60. Recognizing that the emergency medical and public health response has benefited from extensive attention and strong coordination platforms, the Commission instead focused on the potential of the epidemic to reverse the gains made towards peace consolidation. The Commission's discussions highlighted the ways in which the Ebola outbreak has exposed ongoing State fragility and the weaknesses of governance structures despite the important investments made in institution-building in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone over the past decade. The Ebola outbreak has also had a negative impact on many key sectors of the economy, causing sharp downturns in international trade, projected economic growth and the fiscal positions of the three countries most affected.

61. Based on those initial discussions, the Commission requested the Secretary-General to further assess the epidemic's impact on social cohesion, economic development, security, local administration, governance and political institutions, drawing upon the ongoing efforts of the United Nations, the international community, regional organizations and international financial institutions. This assessment should help accelerate and more effectively guide international assistance aimed at promoting institutional and economic recovery.

62. The Commission will continue to offer a platform in New York where the countries most affected by the Ebola outbreak can highlight critical gaps and long-term needs. In connection with its function in the areas of advocacy, accompaniment and sustaining attention, the Commission will avail itself of the platform for discussions, information-sharing and awareness-raising among a broad constellation of actors that includes Member States, the United Nations and international financial institutions.

Participation of women in peacebuilding

63. The Commission has continued to place special emphasis on the importance of the participation of women in and their empowerment for peacebuilding. This work is a continuation of the Commission's focus on the topic in 2013 and its declaration of 26 September 2013 on women's economic empowerment for peacebuilding

(see PBC/7/OC/3). The Commission consistently sought to mainstream a gender perspective throughout its policy and advocacy-related activities in collaboration with UN-Women during the reporting period.

64. On 3 September, the Commission held a special event dedicated to the theme "Women, everyday peacebuilders". The objective of the special event was to shed light on local peacebuilding initiatives led by women in diverse contexts. While high-level peace negotiations receive extensive attention, local peacebuilding initiatives generally garner far less recognition and support. The session was addressed by Nobel Peace Prize laureate Leymah Gbowee of Liberia and brought Member States together with women peace activists from Colombia, Kenya and Liberia as well as with senior United Nations officials. The discussions recognized the diversity and significance of efforts led by women to build and sustain peace during and after violent conflict. Discussions also pointed to the need to prioritize women's empowerment in peacebuilding-related strategies and programmes. In a similar vein, the chair of the Liberia configuration organized a special discussion, in the margins of the fifty-eighth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, on the role of women in promoting the effective management of natural resources as a key part of the overall promotion of inclusive development and sustainable peace.

65. Through its country-specific engagement, the Commission is uniquely placed to proactively engage national stakeholders on women's participation in peacebuilding and to encourage action at the national level, in particular in the field of women's economic empowerment for peacebuilding. In this respect, the Commission noted that the planned high-level global review of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), which coincides with the 2015 review, represents an opportunity to assess successes and challenges in strengthening women's participation in post-conflict peacebuilding.

III. Conclusions and agenda going forward

66. The next reporting period for the Commission will coincide with the comprehensive review of the peacebuilding architecture led by the General Assembly and the Security Council. At the same time, the Commission will continue to pursue several important work streams that would further strengthen its country-specific and policy-related engagements.

Follow-up to the first and preparation for the second annual session (June 2015)

67. The follow-up to the first annual session will naturally be carried forward in 2015. The follow-up exercise will guide the Commission's preparation for the second annual session, including on the selection of a theme that would help further elaborate on the identified policy areas that require further development.

Action

- The Organizational Committee will designate a coordinator to convene informal discussions of interested members, United Nations partners, international financial institutions, regional organizations and development banks

- The informal discussions will explore (a) the specific policy areas that require further elaboration during the second annual session in relation to domestic revenue generation in and the fight against illicit financial flows from countries emerging from conflict; and (b) general advocacy-related actions with intergovernmental forums in collaboration with and the support of the African Union and the Economic Commission for Africa

Integrate the perspectives of regional actors

68. The Commission will continue to place particular emphasis on engaging and collaborating with regional actors in policy-related and country-specific activities.

Action

- The Organizational Committee will consult with the African Caucus in follow-up to the visit undertaken by the Chair of the Commission and chairs of the Burundi, Central African Republic and Guinea-Bissau configurations to African Union headquarters (26 November). The purpose of the follow-up will be to ensure that the agreed areas of policy and country-specific collaboration are activated
- The Organizational Committee will also follow up on the relevant ideas generated through the Cairo workshop on regional aspects of peacebuilding identifying gaps, challenges and opportunities, in particular as they concern efforts to forge more effective partnerships and coherence among African regional actors, the United Nations and international financial institutions
- The country configurations will continue to engage members from Africa, including through the African Caucus, in support of the agreed peacebuilding priorities and objectives for each country on the agenda, with particular emphasis on Burundi, the Central African Republic and Guinea-Bissau

Focus and sustain attention on the long-term impacts of the Ebola outbreak

69. The Commission will follow up on the anticipated assessment by the United Nations of the impact of the Ebola outbreak in the areas of security, local governance, political institutions, social cohesion and economic recovery, taking into consideration a comprehensive regional and longer-term approach.

Action

- The Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone configurations will explore the specific advocacy channels through which the outcome of the assessment can be further pursued, including through partnerships with United Nations and non-United Nations actors
- The three configurations will periodically update the members of the Organizational Committee on the results of its joint advocacy and accompanied efforts and will explore the need for collective messaging from the Commission, including through political statements, as appropriate

Improve the advisory function with regard to and the modality of interaction with the General Assembly and the Security Council

70. The Commission will continue to explore practical means to exercise its advisory function with regard to the General Assembly and the Security Council.

Action

- The Organizational Committee will draw upon the main findings of the stock-taking exercise undertaken in 2014 of its advisory function to and modality of interaction with the Security Council. To this end, the Committee will designate one of the Commission's members on the Security Council to succeed Rwanda in coordinating this periodic stock-taking exercise
- The Chair will coordinate with the Presidency of the Security Council in preparation for the convening of the fourth informal interactive dialogue, which can take place in conjunction with the upcoming annual briefing to the Council on the present report
- The chairs of relevant country configurations will continue to ensure that their periodic formal briefings to the Council on the countries concerned will be synchronized with the timing of their field visits and will be focused on specific areas to which the Council's attention should be drawn

Develop a strategy to strengthen the gender perspective in country-specific engagement

71. The Commission will develop a practical approach to its thematic focus on women's participation in peacebuilding in 2013 and 2014.

Action

- The Organizational Committee will initiate a discussion on elements of a possible strategy that can help integrate a gender perspective into its country-specific engagement within the framework of performing its three core functions

Improve certain aspects of the working methods

72. The Commission will continue to explore improvements in outstanding areas of its working methods that would enhance the clarity of its objectives and the predictability of its calendar and activities.

Action

- Starting in mid-February 2015, the Organizational Committee will share a quarterly indicative calendar, timeline and information on progress in the implementation of the actions stipulated in this forward agenda
- By mid-February 2015, country-specific configurations will share the basic outlines of their objectives and planned activities for the year; those outlines will be updated on a quarterly basis
- By mid-February 2015, the Working Group on Lessons Learned will submit its suggested focus theme and work programme for the year.

United Nations S/2015/175

Security Council

Distr.: General
11 March 2015

Original: English

Report of the Secretary-General concerning the credentials of the alternate representative of Jordan on the Security Council

Pursuant to rule 15 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the Secretary-General wishes to report that he has received a letter dated 25 February 2015 from the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of Jordan stating that Mr. Muaz Al-Otoom has been appointed alternate representative of Jordan on the Security Council.

In the opinion of the Secretary-General, this letter constitutes adequate provisional credentials.

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United Nations S/2015/176

Security Council

Distr.: General
12 March 2015
English
Original: French

Letter dated 12 March 2015 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of France to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that on Friday, 27 March 2015, at 10 a.m., the Permanent Mission of France to the United Nations plans to hold in the Security Council, under the French presidency, an open debate on the victims of attacks and abuses on ethnic or religious grounds in the Middle East. The related concept note is provided in the annex to this letter.

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Alexis **Lamek**
Deputy Permanent Representative
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex to the letter dated 12 March 2015 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of France to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English and French]

Concept note for the Security Council open debate on the victims of attacks and abuses on ethnic or religious grounds in the Middle East, 27 March 2015

1. Context

Following the recent tragic events in which Christians in the Middle East were targeted (the abduction of Christians by Daesh in the Syrian Arab Republic, the destruction of Christian sites, the killing of 21 Egyptian Copts by a terrorist group in Libya), it is important for the Security Council and the entire international community to mobilize against the systematic and widespread persecution by Daesh of ethnic or religious groups and other minorities in an attempt to methodically eradicate the diversity of the social fabric of societies in the Middle East.

In recent months, intolerance, violent extremism and religious or ethnic persecution have gained ground in the Middle East; grave and widespread violations of human rights and international humanitarian law are being committed in the region. Christians, Yezidi, Kurds, Turkmen, Shabak and, in some countries, Sunnis and Shias and others belonging to communities or minorities have been abused by Daesh, affiliated groups or other terrorist organizations, and see their future in the region threatened. That persecution includes targeted killings, forced conversions, abductions, slavery, torture, sexual and physical violence, and the besieging of entire communities on the basis of ethnic, religious or sectarian affiliation. Hundreds of thousands of civilians belonging to these communities have been forced to flee. As part of this systematic and widespread strategy of religious and ethnic persecution, and in an attempt to erase any trace of cultural diversity, Daesh has intentionally destroyed Sunni and Shia shrines, Christian monasteries and churches, and other places of cultural or religious significance.

In this context, it is crucial that the Security Council and the international community fully mobilize to address the widespread and systematic persecution by Daesh of individuals belonging to ethnic and religious groups and other minorities and show their joint commitment to an inclusive Middle East rich in diversity and history in its various cultures and religions. France therefore wishes to hold, during its presidency, a ministerial meeting of the Security Council on 27 March on the question of minorities in the Middle East being persecuted on ethnic or religious grounds.

This high-level meeting will give us an opportunity to condemn the widespread and systematic persecution of members of these ethnic or religious groups, to address the impunity of the perpetrators and to reaffirm the undeniable right of these individuals to live in their own country in peace, freedom, equality and dignity. It will also allow us to call on all Member States to respect and protect fundamental rights and freedoms, including the freedom of religion or belief, of all individuals, regardless of their national origin, ethnicity or religion; to combat all forms of racism and discrimination; and to promote the development of more

inclusive societies. Building on the outcome of the Washington Summit of 19 February, measures to combat terrorism and violent extremism while respecting human rights and international humanitarian law could also be considered. Finally, humanitarian assistance for countries facing the challenge of managing hundreds of thousands of displaced persons is key to ensuring the preservation of inclusive societies, and could also be addressed at the meeting.

2. Format

The meeting will be held on 27 March at 10 a.m. in the Security Council Chamber.

Its purpose is to highlight the situation of persecuted minorities in the Middle East and to mobilize the international community to find ways to protect the diversity of Middle Eastern societies, with a view to identifying measures to combat impunity and to provide security and humanitarian assistance.

The meeting will be chaired by Mr. Laurent Fabius, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Development of France, and will be held at ministerial level.

The meeting will be public and open to all Member States.

The Secretary-General (to be confirmed) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Prince Zeid Ra'ad Al-Hussein (to be confirmed) will brief the Security Council. Other eminent individuals, such as religious leaders and members of civil society engaged in defending human rights, combatting discrimination, or promoting tolerance and inter-faith dialogue, will also be invited to address the Council.

United Nations S/2015/177

Security Council

Distr.: General
13 March 2015

Original: English

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force for the period from 20 November 2014 to 3 March 2015

I. Introduction

1. The present report gives an account of the activities of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) during the past three months, pursuant to the mandate contained in Security Council resolution 350 (1974) and extended by subsequent resolutions, most recently resolution 2192 (2014).

II. Situation in the area and activities of the Force

2. During the reporting period, the ceasefire between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic generally was maintained, albeit in a continuously volatile environment attributable to the ongoing conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic and despite a number of significant violations of the Disengagement of Forces Agreement of 1974 by Israeli and Syrian forces, which are set out below. The Syrian armed forces carried out military activities and security operations against armed groups, often in response to offensives carried out by the armed groups. Inside the area of separation, the presence of the Syrian armed forces and military equipment, as well as any other armed personnel and military equipment, other than that of UNDOF, is in violation of the Disengagement of Forces Agreement. As underscored by the Security Council in its resolution 2192 (2014), there should be no military activity of any kind in the area of separation.

3. A number of significant incidents occurred on 7 December 2014 and 18 and 27 January 2015 across the ceasefire line in violation of the Disengagement of Forces Agreement. On 7 December, UNDOF personnel observed two aircraft flying from the Alpha side into the area of separation and further into the area of limitation, before losing sight of the aircraft. On 18 January, UNDOF personnel on the Alpha side observed two unmanned aerial vehicles crossing the ceasefire line from the Alpha to the Bravo side approximately 1.5 km from United Nations outpost 37B in the general direction of United Nations position 30. UNDOF personnel observed the unmanned aerial vehicles until they disappeared from their sight. Several minutes later, UNDOF observed smoke from the general direction of position 30. The UNDOF personnel could not determine the origin of the smoke, as it was on low ground relative to their location. Shortly thereafter, two unmanned

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aerial vehicles appeared in sight of the UNDOF personnel, flying westward from the general direction of position 30 and crossing the ceasefire line south of outpost 37B. Later the same day, Hizbullah alleged that Israel had conducted an airstrike on the Golan on 18 January, which killed several Hizbullah members and an Iranian military officer.

4. On 27 January, UNDOF observed one incident of firing from the Bravo side across the ceasefire line. United Nations personnel at a temporary observation post close to Camp Ziouani heard two large explosions and saw two impacts approximately 4 km west of the ceasefire line and 5 km north-west of Camp Ziouani. Several minutes later, they observed a third impact, in the Mount Hermon area, approximately 2 km south of United Nations position Hermon South in the area of limitation. United Nations personnel were approximately 400 m from the location where the rocket landed and had to evacuate the area. The point of origin of the fire could not be seen. Subsequently, United Nations personnel at United Nations observation post 73 observed the firing of 18 artillery rounds from an Israel Defense Forces (IDF) battery of 155 mm artillery deployed south of the observation post. IDF informed UNDOF that the point of origin of the fire had been a position north of Camp Faoaur and that IDF had directed its fire at this location. UNDOF restricted its movements at Camp Ziouani to a minimum and stopped all movements north of the camp in the direction of Majdal Shams. The Senior Syrian Arab Delegate informed UNDOF that "terrorists" had fired several rockets from an area west of Harfa, a village approximately 3 km north of Camp Faouar, into the occupied Golan, intending to cause further deterioration of the situation on the Golan. He indicated that the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic was planning to strike against the "terrorists" and emphasized that they were the only target. The acting UNDOF Force Commander conveyed this information to IDF and urged utmost restraint in order not to escalate the situation further. On 28 January, after midnight, IDF carried out an airstrike on two Syrian armed forces locations in the area of limitation, one in Al Wisyah, approximately 3 km south of Camp Faouar, and a second east of the village of Jaba, destroying two artillery positions. UNDOF personnel observed heavy anti-aircraft fire from areas east and north of Khan Arnabeh. The acting Force Commander once more urged IDF to use utmost restraint to prevent the situation from escalating further. No injuries or damage was reported to UNDOF from the impacts on the Alpha side or from the subsequent artillery fire onto the Bravo side.

5. Crossing of the ceasefire line by civilians, primarily shepherds, was observed by United Nations personnel on an almost daily basis. After the issuance of my previous report, UNDOF observed one occasion in November and several in January and February when armed individuals crossed the ceasefire line, approached the technical fence and at times interacted with IDF across the ceasefire line in the vicinity of United Nations observation posts 51 and 54. In some instances, wounded individuals were handed over from the Bravo side to the Alpha side. During the evening of 20 January, in the area north of observation post 54, UNDOF observed two trucks crossing from the Bravo side to the Alpha side, where they were received by IDF personnel. The trucks were loaded with sacks before returning to the Bravo side. On at least four occasions in February, United Nations personnel at observation post 54 saw vehicles, including small trucks, crossing the ceasefire line from the Bravo side and approaching the technical fence. On one such occasion, several vehicles, including some with anti-aircraft guns mounted on the

back, were seen parked next to the technical fence. Owing to the terrain, UNDOF could not observe whether interaction between individuals on the Alpha and the Bravo sides took place.

6. UNDOF protested all firing across the ceasefire line to the Senior Syrian Arab Delegate and IDF. All incidents of firing into the area of separation and across the ceasefire line, as well as the crossing by individuals of the ceasefire line, are violations of the Disengagement of Forces Agreement.

7. In employing its best efforts to maintain the ceasefire and see that it is scrupulously observed, as prescribed by the Disengagement of Forces Agreement, UNDOF reports all breaches of the ceasefire line. During the incident of 27 January and the immediate aftermath, the acting Force Commander was in ongoing close contact with both parties to the Disengagement Agreement to prevent an escalation of the situation across the ceasefire line.

8. UNDOF observed and reported instances of transborder movements of unidentified individuals between Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic in the northern part of the area of separation.

9. In the context of the Syrian internal conflict, the areas of Jabbata, Trunje and Ufaniyah in the northern part of the area of separation remained relatively quiet, despite the end late in August of a local truce arrangement when extremist armed groups from the southern part of the area of separation had linked up with armed members of the opposition in Jabbata. In the central part of the area of separation, the situation remained largely unchanged. Heavy fighting took place between Syrian armed forces and armed groups in the area south of Al Baath and Khan Arnabeh on 24 and 25 December when the Syrian armed forces repelled an attack by the armed groups. In the course of the fighting on 24 and 25 December, UNDOF observed 43 artillery impacts in the area of United Nations observation post 56. Syrian armed forces continued to fire on armed members of the opposition in the areas of Jaba and Um Batinah, adjacent to the area of separation. Small-scale attacks by the Syrian armed forces against areas controlled by armed groups took place on several occasions during the second half of January in the general area of Masharah in the area of limitation. Armed groups continued to exercise control of most of the southern parts of the areas of separation and limitation on the Bravo side. The Syrian armed forces targeted these areas with direct fire. Late in November and towards the end of January, the Syrian armed forces also used airstrikes in the southern part of the area of limitation; in the latter instance, this occurred during an attack by armed groups in areas east of the UNDOF area of operations, around Ash Sheikh Maskeen.

10. Starting on 8 February, the Syrian armed forces launched a large-scale operation against armed groups in an area east and north-east of Khan Arnabeh and south of the main road to Damascus, gaining control of several villages and hilltops that had been controlled by the armed groups during the past months. The operation extended to the areas along two main roads linking Damascus with Quneitra and Dara'a. Syrian authorities acknowledged to UNDOF that the operation by the Syrian armed forces was carried out with "Syria's allies". After a lull in the fighting, most probably due to adverse weather conditions, the Syrian armed forces resumed their offensive on 22 February. That day, UNDOF observed 15 airstrikes conducted by the Syrian armed forces in the UNDOF area of operations east of United Nations position 80. Throughout the day, UNDOF observed approximately 300 civilians in

total, mostly women and children, from the areas affected by the airstrikes move farther west into the area of separation in the vicinity of United Nations positions and the Israeli technical fence. After the air campaign ended, the individuals moved back east in the direction of their villages. The following day, while shelling continued, around 150 civilians, mostly women and children, moved into the vicinity of position 80.

11. Several incidents that jeopardized United Nations personnel and positions occurred. On 24 November, an exchange of fire took place between members of different armed groups in the vicinity of United Nations position 80. Several stray bullets passed over the position. On 27 November, United Nations personnel at position 80 once again observed an exchange of fire between members of different armed groups approximately 1 km from the position. On 24 December, United Nations personnel at observation post 54 observed approximately 35 armed persons waving weapons in front of the observation post and firing shots into the air. On 23 January, personnel at United Nations observation post 51 went into the shelter after an artillery shell landed approximately 500 m from the observation post.

12. On 18 and 22 December and 23 January, United Nations personnel at observation post 51 observed a white armoured vehicle with United Nations markings moving in the area of Al Qahtaniyah. On 22 December, personnel at observation post 54 observed a white pickup truck with an anti-aircraft gun mounted on the back that is likely to have been a stolen United Nations vehicle. As also reported in my 22 January 2015 report on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014) and 2191 (2014) (S/2015/48), on 7 December 2014 a stolen UNDOF vehicle was used in Dar'a as a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device.

13. During the reporting period, the Syrian armed forces maintained their positions in the area of separation, in particular in the urban centres of Al Baath and Khan Arnabeh and along the main road connecting Quneitra to Damascus, where they reinforced their presence with tanks, armoured vehicles and artillery weapons, in addition to some locations in the area of limitation. The Syrian armed forces generally deployed three tanks in the area of separation, including at their position at Tal al-Kurum, and several others in locations in the area of limitation adjacent to the area of separation. On various occasions, UNDOF observed a total of three tanks in the areas of Tal al-Garbi and Al Qahtaniyah, which were controlled by armed groups.

14. UNDOF protested the presence of Syrian armed forces and equipment in the area of separation, and the firing into and inside the area of separation. The Force Commander reiterated to the Syrian authorities the obligation of the Syrian armed forces to halt military operations in the area of separation and to cease firing from the area of limitation, stressing the importance of abiding by the terms of the Disengagement of Forces Agreement and ensuring the safety and security of United Nations personnel on the ground. Senior United Nations officials have conveyed similar messages to the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations.

15. During the reporting period, UNDOF observed three tented camps housing internally displaced persons, two camps in the vicinity of United Nations position 80 and one in a wooded area in the vicinity of Kudnaa in the area of limitation. Approximately 1 km north of the position, in the vicinity of Al Aishah village,

UNDOF observed 26 tents housing approximately 150 persons. In a second location north-west of Al Aishah village, straddling the ceasefire line, UNDOF observed 20 large and 15 smaller tents housing approximately 180 individuals. Two tents were observed in the vicinity of Kudnaa; the number of individuals staying there is not known. Owing to the continued closure of the established crossing between the Alpha and Bravo sides late in August, UNDOF is currently not in a position to facilitate, in cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross, humanitarian crossings, including for students, between the Alpha and the Bravo sides.

16. Since the temporary relocation of UNDOF from a number of its positions on the Bravo side in mid-September, and as mentioned in my previous report (S/2014/859), UNDOF, in consultation with the parties, continued to review the situation in the area of separation. The ultimate goal for UNDOF is to return fully to the area of separation when the situation permits. In this connection, UNDOF assessed the prevailing security situation in the area of separation and determined that the conditions are not conducive to a return of the Force to the positions it vacated.

17. In its current configuration, UNDOF has continued to carry out its mandate by maintaining the visibility of the area of separation and the ceasefire line, albeit limited, from a number of positions it continues to hold in the area of separation. The Force continued to maintain four positions on Mount Hermon in the northern part of the area of separation and position 80 in the southern part, as well as position 22 on the Alpha side. On Mount Hermon, UNDOF conducts foot and vehicle patrols twice daily. UNDOF operations continued to be supported by the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) military observers in Observer Group Golan, who maintained five fixed and four temporary observation posts on the Alpha side. The focus of Observer Group Golan activities remained on around-the-clock static observation, investigations and situational analysis. Through Observer Group Golan, UNDOF continued to carry out fortnightly inspections of equipment and force levels in the area of limitation on the Alpha side. Liaison officers from the Alpha side accompanied Observer Group Golan inspection teams. Inspections and mobile operations in the area of limitation on the Bravo side remained suspended because of the security situation. As in the past, the Force faced restrictions on freedom of movement, and its inspection teams were denied access to some positions on the Alpha side. Observer Group Golan members continued to experience restrictions of movement on the Alpha side when entering and exiting United Nations observation post 73, which is located east of the Israeli technical fence. UNDOF peacekeepers remained deployed at observation posts 54 and 73 to enhance protection of the military observers.

18. During the reporting period, IDF deployed the Iron Dome defence system between 3 and 10 February and on one occasion a multiple-launch rocket system, in addition to maintaining the intermittent presence of 155 mm artillery on the Alpha side within 10 km of the ceasefire line.

19. In its efforts to ensure that it continues to implement its mandate effectively, UNDOF continued to engage the parties on the practical arrangements to be put in place to establish an interim configuration that will allow it to maintain the ceasefire, continue to monitor, verify and report on violations of the Disengagement of Forces Agreement, and exercise its critical liaison functions with the parties,

particularly with a view to preventing an escalation of incidents. The mission headquarters, comprising the Office of the Head of Mission and Force Commander with his advisory staff and security detail as well as some mission support functions, has been established in Damascus. A suitable logistics site has been identified in a location near Damascus and discussions with the Syrian authorities are in progress for UNDOF to gain use of the facility.

20. Discussions with the parties continue with respect to procedures for crossing between the Alpha and the Bravo sides in the absence of the established crossing at Quneitra. UNDOF continues to engage with the parties on the use of technology to offset the loss of situational awareness in the area of separation. In addition, discussions with the Alpha side continue with respect to additional locations required to establish temporary United Nations positions for observing the ceasefire line from the Alpha side.

21. UNDOF continued to focus on contingency planning for the reinforcement and evacuation of United Nations positions and observation posts. UNDOF, through its Force reserve company, also conducted regular exercises and training. The company remains in two UNDOF locations, Camp Ziouani and position 80. UNDOF strengthened the Mount Hermon positions by augmenting the troop strength and force protection. In addition, the mission has identified the need to reinforce position 12 in the Mount Hermon area and to strengthen the UNDOF presence in that location.

22. Movement of UNDOF personnel on the Bravo side remains limited. UNDOF continues to resupply the positions on Mount Hermon from Damascus. Convoys between Damascus and the Mount Hermon positions to ensure the resupply as well as maintenance of the positions are conducted several times per week in armoured vehicles and with UNDOF security escort.

23. As at 22 February, UNDOF comprised 789 troops, including 32 women, from Fiji (301), India (190), Ireland (138), Nepal (158) and the Netherlands (2). In addition, 67 military observers from UNTSO, including one woman, assisted the Force in carrying out its tasks. On 9 February, as part of the reconfiguration of the Force, 146 troops of the Fijian contingent redeployed to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon.

III. Implementation of Security Council resolution 338 (1973)

24. The Security Council, when deciding in its resolution 2131 (2013) to renew the mandate of UNDOF for a further period of six months, until 30 June 2014, called upon the parties concerned to immediately implement its resolution 338 (1973) and requested the Secretary-General to submit, at the end of the period, a report on developments in the situation and the measures taken to implement that resolution. The search for a peaceful settlement in the Middle East, in particular the efforts made at various levels to implement resolution 338 (1973), was dealt with in my report on the situation in the Middle East (A/69/341), submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 69/24 on Jerusalem and 69/25 on the Syrian Golan.

25. Since the discontinuation of indirect peace talks in December 2008, there have been no negotiations between the parties. The Syrian conflict is further reducing the prospects for their resumption and progress towards peace between Israel and the

Syrian Arab Republic. I look forward to a peaceful resolution of the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic and the resumption of efforts towards a comprehensive, just and durable peace settlement, as called for by the Security Council in its resolution 338 (1973) and other relevant resolutions.

IV. Observations

26. I note with concern the serious violations of the Disengagement of Forces Agreement that have taken place. The firing from the Bravo side across the ceasefire line as well as IDF responses with artillery fire and airstrikes jeopardize the long-term ceasefire between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic. It remains critical that both sides maintain liaison with UNDOF in the first instance to prevent any escalation of the situation across the ceasefire line. The mission's liaison with the parties contributed to the de-escalation of the situation across the ceasefire line on 27 and 28 January. The mandate of UNDOF remains an important element in ensuring the stability of the region. For its part, the United Nations will spare no effort in ensuring that the long-held ceasefire between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic continues to hold.

27. I remain deeply concerned about the continuing deterioration of the security situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, its impact on the Syrian population and its potential implications for the stability of the region. The presence of the Syrian armed forces and unauthorized military equipment in the area of separation are grave violations of the Disengagement of Forces Agreement. The increased use of heavy weapons by both the Syrian armed forces and armed groups in the continuing Syrian conflict, including air power by Government forces in the area of limitation on the Bravo side, including in the vicinity of the area of separation, is disturbing. There should be no military forces in the area of separation other than those of UNDOF. I note with concern the presence and use of tanks by the Syrian armed forces and, in increasing number, by the armed groups in the area of separation. I call upon all parties to the Syrian conflict to cease military actions throughout the country, including in the UNDOF area of operations. I call upon all parties to take all measures necessary to protect civilians. I also urge the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to stop the use of airstrikes, which cause suffering to the civilian population and destroy its livelihoods. I reiterate that all military activities in the area of separation conducted by any actor pose a risk to the ceasefire and to the local civilian population, in addition to the United Nations personnel on the ground.

28. The situation has continued to significantly affect the UNDOF area of operations. Armed opposition groups and other armed groups continue to maintain control over significant sections of the area of separation and remain present along the section of the main road connecting the two UNDOF camps. The established crossing between the Alpha and the Bravo sides remains closed. It is critical that countries with influence continue to strongly convey to the armed groups in the UNDOF area of operations the need to cease any actions that jeopardize the safety and security of United Nations personnel and to accord United Nations personnel the freedom to carry out their mandate safely and securely. Any hostile act against United Nations personnel, including threatening their physical safety, restricting their movement and direct and indirect firing at United Nations personnel and facilities by anyone, is unacceptable.

29. The primary responsibility for the safety and security of United Nations personnel in the areas of separation and limitation on the Bravo side rests with the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic. The safety and security of United Nations personnel must be ensured.

30. Both Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic have stated their continued commitment to the Disengagement of Forces Agreement and the presence of UNDOF. I call on both parties to continue to assist UNDOF in achieving its interim configuration in structure and deployment to ensure that the mission is in a position to effectively implement its mandate, until such time as the security situation allows the Force to return fully to the area of separation. I note the assistance provided by Israel and the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic in facilitating the provision of essential supplies in support of the Force.

31. It is equally critical that the Security Council continue to bring its influence to bear on the parties concerned to ensure that UNDOF is accorded the ability to operate freely. It is essential that UNDOF continue to have at its disposal all necessary means and resources that will allow it to return to the area of separation as the situation permits.

32. UNDOF also needs to retain the confidence and commitment of troop-contributing countries. I am grateful to the Governments of Fiji, India, Ireland, Nepal and the Netherlands for their contributions to UNDOF and for staying the course under these extremely trying circumstances. In addition, I am grateful to the Member States contributing military observers to UNTSO. The continued credible presence of UNDOF remains an important element in ensuring stability on the Golan and in the region.

33. In conclusion, I wish to express my appreciation to Lieutenant General Iqbal Singh Singha, who completed his tour of duty on 2 January, for his dedication and leadership of UNDOF over the past two and half years, during a difficult period for the mission. I also wish to express appreciation to the military and civilian personnel serving in UNDOF and the military observers in Observer Group Golan, who continue to perform with efficiency and commitment, under extremely challenging circumstances, the important tasks assigned to them by the Security Council. I have full confidence that UNDOF will continue to use its best efforts to carry out its mandate under the leadership of Major General Purna Chandra Thapa.